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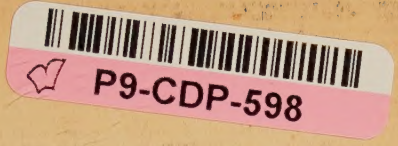
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Authors and Friends

by

Annie Fields

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1897

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To

HELEN CHOATE BELL

O Comes musica et præclara

'"The Company of the Leaf" wore laurel chaplets "whose lusty green may not appaired be." They represent the brave and steadfast of all ages, the great knights and champions, the constant lovers and pure women of past and present times.'.

Keping beautie fresh and greene
For there nis storme that ne may hem deface.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

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The Publishers of Harper's Magazine and of the Century Magazine have kindly allowed the republication in this volume of such papers as have been printed in their pages.

LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

GOSHEN PUBLIC LIBRARY.

LONGFELLOW

1807–1882

EVERY year when the lilac buds begin to burst their sheaths and until the full-blown clusters have spent themselves in the early summer air, the remembrance of Longfellow — something of his presence — wakes with us in the morning and recurs with every fragrant breeze. "Now is the time to come to Cambridge," he would say; "the lilacs are getting ready to receive you."

It was the most natural thing in the world that he should care for this common flower, because in spite of a fine separateness from dusty levels which every one felt who approached him, he was first of all a seer of beauty in common things and a singer to the universal heart.

Perhaps no one of the masters who have touched the spirits of humanity to finer issues has been more affectionately followed through his ways and haunts than Longfellow. But the lives of men and women "who rule us from their urns" have always been more or less cloistral. Public curiosity appeared to be stimulated rather than lessened in Longfellow's case by the general acquaintance with his familiar figure and by

his unceasing hospitality. He was a tender father, a devoted friend, and a faithful citizen, and yet something apart and different from all these.

From his early youth Longfellow was a scholar. Especially was his power of acquiring language most unusual.

As his reputation widened, he was led to observe this to be a gift as well as an acquirement. It gave him the convenient and agreeable power of entertaining foreigners who sought his society. He said one evening, late in life, that he could not help being struck with the little trouble it was to him to recall any language he had ever studied, even though he had not spoken it for years. He had found himself talking Spanish, for instance, with considerable ease a few days before. He said he could not recall having even read anything in Spanish for many years, and it was certainly thirty since he had given it any study. Also, it was the same with German. "I cannot imagine," he continued, "what it would be to take up a language and try to master it at this period of my life. I cannot remember how or when I learned any of them; — to-night I have been speaking German, without finding the least difficulty."

A scholar himself, he did not write for scholars, nor study for the sole purpose of becoming a light to any university. It was the energy of a soul looking for larger expansion; a spirit true to itself and its own prompting, finding its way

by labor and love to the free use and development of the power within him. Of his early years some anecdotes have been preserved in a private note-book which have not appeared elsewhere; among them this bit of reminiscence from Hawthorne, who said, in speaking of his own early life and the days at Bowdoin College, where he and Longfellow were in the same class, that no two young men could have been more unlike. Longfellow, he explained, was a tremendous student, and always carefully dressed, while he himself was extremely careless of his appearance, no student at all, and entirely incapable at that period of appreciating Longfellow.

The friendship between these two men ripened with the years. Throughout Longfellow's published correspondence, delightful letters are found to have been exchanged. The very contrast between the two natures attracted them more and more to each other as time went on; and among the later unpublished letters I find a little note from Longfellow in which he says he has had a sad letter from Hawthorne, and adds: "I wish we could have a little dinner for him, of two sad authors and two jolly publishers, nobody else!"

As early as 1849, letters and visits were familiarly exchanged between Mr. Fields and himself, and their friendship must have begun even earlier. He writes: —

"My dear Fields, — I am extremely glad you like the new poems so well. What think you of the enclosed instead of the sad ending of 'The Ship'? Is it better? . . . I send you also 'The Lighthouse,' once more: I think it is improved by your suggestions. See if you can find anything more to retouch. And finally, here is a letter from Hirst. You see what he wants, but I do not feel like giving my 'Dedication' to the 'Courier.' Therefore I hereby give it to you so that I can say it is disposed of. Am I right or wrong?"

Of Longfellow's student days, Mr. Fields once wrote: "I hope they keep bright the little room numbered twenty-seven in Maine Hall in Bowdoin College, for it was in that pleasant apartment, looking out on the pine groves, that the young poet of nineteen wrote many of those beautiful earlier pieces, now collected in his works. These early poems were all composed in 1824 and 1825, during his last years in college, and were printed first in a periodical called 'The United States Literary Gazette,' the sapient editor of which magazine once kindly advised the ardent young scholar to give up poetry and buckle down to the study of law! 'No good can come of it,' he said; 'don't let him do such things; make him stick to prose!' But the pine-trees waving outside his window kept up a perpetual melody in his heart, and he could not choose but sing back to them."

One of the earliest pictures I find of the every-day life of Longfellow when a youth is a little anecdote told by him, in humorous illustration of the woes of young authors. I quote from a brief diary. "Longfellow amused us to-day by talking of his youth, and especially with a description of the first poem he ever wrote, called 'The Battle of Lovell's Pond.' It was printed in a Portland newspaper one morning, and the same evening he was invited to the house of the Chief Justice to meet his son, a rising poet just returned from Harvard. The judge rose in a stately manner during the evening and said to his son: 'Did you see a poem in to-day's paper upon the Battle of Lovell's Pond?' 'No, sir,' said the boy, 'I did not.' 'Well, sir,' responded his father, 'it was a very stiff production. G——, get your own poem on the same subject, and I will read it to the company.' The poem was read aloud, while the perpetrator of the 'stiff production' sat, as he said, very still in a corner."

The great sensitiveness of his nature, one of the poetic qualities, was observed very early, and the description of him as a little boy was the description of the heart and nature of the man. "Active, eager, impressionable; quick-tempered, but as quickly appeased; kind-hearted and affectionate, — the sunlight of the house." One day when a child of ten he came home with his eyes full of tears. His elder

brother was fond of a gun, and had allowed Henry to borrow his. To the little boy's great distress, he had aimed at and shot a robin. He never tried to use a gun again.

Longfellow was said to be very like his mother. His brother wrote of him: "From her must have come to Henry the imaginative and romantic side of his nature. She was fond of poetry and music, and in her youth, of dancing and social gayety. She was a lover of nature in all its aspects. She would sit by a window during a thunderstorm enjoying the excitement of its splendors. Her disposition, through all trials and sorrows, was always cheerful, with a gentle and tranquil fortitude."

No words could describe her son's nature more nearly. When he was only sixteen years old we find him writing to his father: "I wish I could be in Washington during the winter, though I suppose it is rather vain to wish when it is almost impossible for our wishes to become realities. It would be more pleasant to get a peep at Southern people and draw a breath of Southern air, than to be always freezing in the North; but I have very resolutely concluded to enjoy myself heartily wherever I am. I find it most profitable to form such plans as are least liable to failure."

His mother's sympathy with his literary tastes was certainly unusual. He writes to her from college when he was sixteen years old. "I have

this evening been reading a few pages in Gray's odes. I am very much pleased with them." . . . To which she replies : "I wish you would bring Gray home with you. I have a strong inclination to read the poems, since you commend them so highly. I think I should be pleased with them, though Dr. Johnson was not. I do not think the Doctor possessed much sensibility to the charms of poetry, and he was sometimes most unmerciful in his criticism."

The single aim of Longfellow's life, the manner in which from his earliest days he dedicated himself to Letters, would prove alone, if other signs were lacking, the strength of his character. When he was only eighteen he wrote to his mother: "With all my usual delinquency, however, I should have answered your letter before this, had I not received, on Monday, Chatterton's Works, for which I had some time since sent to Boston. It is an elegant work in three large octavo volumes; and since Monday noon I have read the greater part of two of them, besides attending two lectures a day, of an hour each, and three recitations of the same length, together with my study-hours for preparation."

This is said to have been the first handsome book the young student owned, and it was earned by the work of his pen. In this same year, too, we find him hurrying with his lessons (not slighting them), that he might get leisure

to read and think. "Leisure," he wrote his father, "which is to me one of the sweetest things in the world." . . . "I wish I could read and write at the same time."

The eager activity of his mind was already asserting itself, an activity which hardly slackened to the very end.

The severe criticism of his poem on the Battle of Lovell's Pond may have cost him a few tears one night, but it did not alter his determination. He continued to send contributions to the newspapers, and when his father somewhat later suggested that he should consider the question of "studying for a profession," he replied: "If so, what profession? I have a particular and strong prejudice for one course of life to which you, I fear, will not agree." He was not unwilling to pay the price for what he intended to attain. He knew himself, and his only suffering was at the thought of being obliged to turn aside from the aims which Nature held before him.

He was seventeen years old when he wrote to a friend: "Somehow, and yet I hardly know why, I am unwilling to study a profession. I cannot make a lawyer of any eminence, because I have not a talent for argument; I am not good enough for a minister, — and as to Physic, I utterly and absolutely detest it."

To his father the same year he wrote: "I have already hinted to you what would best

please me. I want to spend one year at Cambridge for the purpose of reading history, and of becoming familiar with the best authors in polite literature; whilst at the same time I can be acquiring the Italian language, without an acquaintance with which I shall be shut out from one of the most beautiful departments of letters. . . . The fact is — and I will not disguise it in the least, for I think I ought not — the fact is, I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centres in it. . . . Whether Nature has given me any capacity for knowledge or not, she has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talent in the wide field of literature. With such a belief I must say that I am unwilling to engage in the study of the law. . . . Whatever I do study ought to be engaged in with all my soul, — for I WILL BE EMINENT in something. . . . Let me reside one year at Cambridge; let me study belles-lettres; and after that time it will not require a spirit of prophecy to predict with some degree of certainty what kind of a figure I could make in the literary world. If I fail here, there is still time left for the study of a profession." . . . His father could not make up his mind to trust his son to the uncertain reed of

literature. "As you have not had the fortune (I will not say whether good or ill) to be born rich, you must adopt a profession which will afford you subsistence as well as reputation."

There was, however, a friendly compromise between father and son, and the young student was allowed to pass a year in Cambridge. He replied to his father: "I am very much rejoiced that you accede so readily to my proposition of studying general literature for one year at Cambridge. My grand object in doing this will be to gain as perfect knowledge of the French and Italian languages as can be gained without travelling in France and Italy, — though to tell the truth I intend to visit both before I die. . . . The fact is, I have a most voracious appetite for knowledge. To its acquisition I will sacrifice everything. . . . Nothing could induce me to relinquish the pleasures of literature; . . . but I can be a lawyer. This will support my real existence, literature an IDEAL one.

"I purchased last evening a beautiful pocket edition of Sir William Jones's Letters, and have just finished reading them. Eight languages he was critically versed in; eight more he read with a dictionary: and there were twelve more not wholly unknown to him. I have somewhere seen or heard the observation that as many languages as a person acquires, so many times is he a man."

Happily — how happily we can hardly say —

Madam Bowdoin had left the sum of one thousand dollars towards establishing a professorship of modern languages at the college which was then only a few years older than Longfellow. No steps had yet been taken; but one of the Board, Mr. Orr, having been struck, it appears, by the translation of an ode from Horace made by Longfellow for the senior examination, warmly presented his name for the new chair.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of these benefactions to men of talent and genius. Where would Wordsworth have been, what could he have done, without the gift bestowed upon him by Raisley Calvert! In America such assistance is oftener given in the more impersonal way of endowment of chairs or creating of scholarships. No method less personal or more elevating for the development of the scholar and man of genius could easily be adopted.

The informal proposal of the Board that Longfellow should go to Europe to fit himself for his position was precisely in a line with his most cherished wishes. It was nearly a year from that time, however, before he was actually on his way, "winter and rough weather" and the infrequency of good ships causing many delays. Possibly also the thought of the mother's heart that he was not yet twenty — still young to cut himself off from home and friends — weighed something in the balance. He read law in his father's office, and wrote and read

with ceaseless activity on his own account; publishing his poems and prose papers in the newspapers and annuals of the day. He sailed from New York at last, visiting Boston on his way. There he heard Dr. Channing preach and passed part of an evening with him afterward. Also Professor Ticknor was kind to him, giving him letters to Washington Irving, Professor Eichhorn, and Robert Southey. Dr. Charles Lowell, the father of the future poet, gave him a letter to Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, and President Kirkland was interested in his welfare. Thus he started away with such help and advice as the world could give him.

From that moment his career was simply a question of development. How he could turn the wondrous joys, the strange and solitary experiences of life into light and knowledge and wisdom which he could give to others; this was the never-ending problem of his mind; to this end he turned the labor of his days.

His temperament did not allow him the effervescent expression common to the young. On the contrary, when writing to his sisters from Italy during these student days, he says: "But with me all deep impressions are silent ones." And thus the sorrows of life, of which he early bore so heavy a burden, found little expression. He wore them in his heart, whence they came again in his poems to soothe the spirit of humanity. The delightful story of his three years

of study and absence can be traced step by step in the journals and letters edited by his brother; but however interesting it is to follow him in every detail, it is nevertheless true that the singleness of aim and strength of character which distinguished Longfellow, combined with extreme delicacy and sensitiveness of perception, were his qualities from the beginning and remained singularly unchanged to the end.

His history is not without its tragedies, but they were coördinated in his spirit to a sense of the unity of life. He was the psalmist, the interpreter. How could he render again the knowledge of divine goodness and divine love which were revealed to him? First came the duty of acquiring learning; of getting the use of many languages and thus of many forms of thought, in order to master the vehicles of expression. To this end he labored without ceasing, laughing at himself for calling that labor which gave him in the acquisition great pleasure. "If you call it labor!" he wrote in one of his letters home after speaking of his incessant studies.

His journals and letters, except the few early ones to his father, seldom speak either of the heat of composition or of the toils of study. He kept any mention of these, like all his deeper experiences, to himself, but writes chiefly of more external matters; of his relaxations and pleasures, — such as are surely indispensable to

an author and student after extreme tension of the brain and hours of emotion.

Longfellow was twenty-two years old when he took up his residence as professor at Bowdoin College, where he translated and prepared the French grammar and the French and Spanish text-books which he desired for his classes. He was also made college librarian — a duty which required only one hour a day in those early times, but, added to his other duties, gave him all the occupation he needed. "The intervals of college duty I fill up with my own studies," he wrote to his friend, George W. Greene, with whom he had already formed a friendship which was to continue unbroken during their lives.

At the age of twenty-four Longfellow married a lovely young lady, the daughter of Judge Potter, of Portland. She was entirely sympathetic with his tastes, having herself received a very unusual education for those days in Greek and Latin among her other studies. In the "Footsteps of Angels" she is commemorated as

> "the Being Beauteous
> Who unto my youth was given,
> More than all things else to love me."

His brother writes of this period: "They were tenderly devoted to each other: and never was a home more happy than theirs, when, soon after their marriage, they began house-

keeping in Brunswick. . . . In this pleasant home, and with this blessed companionship, Mr. Longfellow devoted himself with fresh interest to his literary pursuits."

The monetary returns for all his labors at this period in America were inconceivably small. He amused his friends one day in later years by confessing that Mr. Buckingham paid him by one year's subscription to the "New England Magazine" for his translation of the "Coplas de Manrique" and several prose articles. After this he sent his poems to Messrs. Allen and Ticknor, who presented him the volume in which they appeared and sundry other books as compensation.

What a singular contrast was this beginning to his future literary history! Late in life his publisher wrote: "I remember how instantaneously in the year 1839 'The Voices of the Night' sped triumphantly on its way. At present his currency in Europe is almost unparalleled. Twenty-four publishing houses in England have issued the whole or a part of his works. Many of his poems have been translated into Russian and Hebrew. 'Evangeline' has been translated three times into German, and 'Hiawatha' has not only gone into nearly all the modern languages, but can now be read in Latin. I have seen translations of all Longfellow's principal works, in prose and poetry, in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese,

Dutch, Swedish, and Danish. The Emperor of Brazil has himself translated and published 'Robert of Sicily,' one of the poems in 'Tales of a Wayside Inn,' into his native tongue, and in China they use a fan which has become immensely popular on account of the 'Psalm of Life' being printed on it in the language of the Celestial Empire. Professor Kneeland, who went to the national millennial celebration in Iceland, told me that when he was leaving that far-away land, on the verge almost of the Arctic Circle, the people said to him: 'Tell Longfellow that we love him; tell him we read and rejoice in his poems; tell him that Iceland knows him by heart.' To-day there is no disputing the fact that Longfellow is more popular than any other living poet; that his books are more widely circulated, command greater attention, and bring more copyright money than those of any other author, not excepting Tennyson, now writing English verse."

Meanwhile the young professor, after four years of retirement and work at Bowdoin, began to look about him and to contemplate another flight. Before his plans were laid, however, Professor Ticknor relinquished his position at Harvard, which was immediately offered to Mr. Longfellow under what were for that period the most delightful conditions possible. President Quincy wrote to him, "The salary will be fifteen hundred dollars a year. Residence in

Cambridge will be required. . . . Should it be your wish, previously to entering upon the duties of the office, to reside in Europe, at your own expense, a year or eighteen months for the purpose of a more perfect attainment of the German, Mr. Ticknor will retain his office till your return."

During his second visit to Europe in the year 1835, this time accompanied by his wife, she became ill and died at Rotterdam, "closing her peaceful life by a still more peaceful death." Longfellow continued his journey and his studies. Into his lonely hours, which no society and no occupation could fill, came, his brother tells us, "the sense and assurance of the spiritual presence of her who had loved him and who loved him still, and whose dying lips had said, 'I will be with you and watch over you.'" At Christmas of the same year a new grief fell upon him in the death of his brother-in-law and dearest friend. He received it as an added admonition "to set about the things he had to do in greater earnestness."

"Henceforth," he wrote, "let me bear upon my shield the holy cross."

No history of Longfellow can hope to trace the springs which fed his poetic mind without recording the deep sorrows, the pain, the loneliness of his days. Born with especial love of home and all domesticities, the solitary years moved on, bringing him a larger power for soothing the grief of others because he had

himself known the darkest paths of earthly experience.

He continued his lonely studies at Heidelberg during the winter, but with the spring, when the almond-trees were blossoming, the spirit of youth revived and he again took up his pilgrimage and began the sketches published some years later as the consecutive story of "Hyperion." In the opening chapter of that book he says: "The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone. Shadows of evening fall around us, and the world seems but a dim reflection, — itself a broader shadow. We look forward into the coming lonely night. The soul withdraws into itself. Then stars arise and the night is holy. Paul Flemming had experienced this, though still young."

Seven long, weary years elapsed between the death of his young wife and the second and perfect marriage of his maturity. In spite of the sorrow and depression which had overwhelmed him, he knew that his work was the basis upon which his life must stand, and in those few years he planted himself firmly in his professorship, published "Outre Mer," and the early poems which won for him an undying reputation as a poet. During this period, too, he made the great friendships of his life, of which he allowed no thread to break during the long years to come. His characteristic steadiness of

aim never failed even in this trying period. He enjoyed the singular advantage of travel in a Europe which is now chiefly a demesne of the past and of the imagination. Having known all the picturesqueness and beauty of England, he settled himself in the old Vassall (or Craigie) House, in Cambridge, with serene enjoyment and appreciation. This house was then in a retired spot, and overwrought as he frequently found himself, the repose of the place was helpful to him. In 1842 he again visited Europe, for the third time. His health suffered from solitude and the continued activities of his mind. "I sometimes think," he said, "that no one with a head and a heart can be perfectly well." Therefore in the spring he obtained leave of absence for six months, and went abroad to try the water cure at Marienberg. One of the chief events of this journey was the beginning of his friendship with Freiligrath. The two men never met again face to face, but they began a correspondence which only ended with their lives. It is in one of his letters to Freiligrath that he writes: "Be true to yourself and burn like a watch-fire afar off there in your Germany." His mind was full of poems; much of his future work was projected although little was completed. He wrote one sonnet called "Mezzo Cammin," never printed until after his death; perhaps he thought it too expressive of personal sadness.

Upon the return voyage, which was a stormy one, he accomplished a feat that many a storm-tossed traveler would consider marvelous indeed. "Not out of my berth," he wrote, "more than twelve hours the first twelve days. There cabined, cribbed, confined, I passed fifteen days. During this time I wrote seven poems on slavery. I meditated upon them in the stormy, sleepless nights, and wrote them down with a pencil in the morning. A small window in the side of the vessel admitted light into my berth, and there I lay on my back and soothed my soul with songs." These poems, with one added as a dedication to Dr. Channing, "threw the author's influence on the side against slavery; and at that time it was a good deal simply to take that unpopular side publicly."

He took up his correspondence at this period with renewed fervor, and what other life can show such devotion to friendship or such a circle of friends? Through good report and evil report his friends were dear to him, and the disparagements of others failed to reach the ear of his heart. In one of his letters to G. W. Greene he says: "It is of great importance to a man to know how he stands with his friends; at least, I think so. The voice of a friend has a wonder-working power; and from the very hour we hear it, 'the fever leaves us.'"

Upon his return home in December, 1836, he began his life in Cambridge among the group

of men who became inseparable friends, — Felton, Sumner, Hillard, and Cleveland. They called themselves the "Five of Clubs," and saw each other continually. Later came Agassiz and a few others. How delightful the little suppers were of those days! He used to write: "We had a gaudiolem last night." When, several years after, he married Frances Appleton and began, as it were, "the new life," his wife wrote to Mr. Greene: "Felton and the rest of the club flourish in immortal youth, and are often with us to dine or sup. I have never seen such a beautiful friendship between men of such distinct personalities, though closely linked together by mutual tastes and affections. They criticise and praise each other's performances, with a frankness not to be surpassed, and seem to have attained that happy height of faith where no misunderstanding, no jealousy, no reserve, exists." It appears, however, that even these delightful friendships had left something to be desired. In his journal he wrote: "Came back to Cambridge and went to Mr. Norton's. There I beheld what perfect happiness may exist on this earth, and felt how I stood alone in life, cut off for a while from those dearest sympathies for which I long." His brother said of him that having known the happiness of domestic life for which his nature was especially formed, "he felt the need of more intimate affection." Thus, after many years of

lonely wandering, another period of Longfellow's life opened with his marriage in 1843. Had he himself been writing of another, he might have divided his story into cantos, each one with a separate theme. One of aspiration, one of endeavor, one with the despair of young sorrow, and one of triumphant love. Advancing thus through the gamut of human experience he might have closed the scene with the immortal line loved of all poets: —

"In sua voluntade e nostra pace."

Thus indeed, reviewing Longfellow's life as a whole, we discern his days to be crowded with incident and experience. Every condition of human life presented itself at his door, and every human being found a welcome there, — incidents and experience coming as frequently to him through the lives of others as through the gate of his own being. The note of love and unity with the Divine will was the dominant one which controlled his spirit and gave him calm.

He early chose Craigie House as the most desirable place for his abode in all the world. The poems and journals are full of his enjoyment of nature as seen from its windows. In the beginning of his residence there he persuaded Mrs. Craigie to allow him to have two rooms; but he soon controlled the second floor, and at the time of his marriage to Miss Apple-

ton her father presented them with the whole of the beautiful estate.

Here his life took shape and his happiness found increase with the days. It was like him to say little in direct speech of all this; but we find a few words describing his wife, of whom his brother wrote that "her calm and quiet face wore habitually a look of seriousness." And then evidently quoting from Henry, he adds, "at times it seemed to make the very air bright with its smiles." She was a beautiful woman of deep but reserved feeling and cultivated tastes and manners. She understood and sympathized in his work, and, even more, she became often its inspiration. During their wedding journey they passed through Springfield, whence she wrote: "In the Arsenal at Springfield we grew quite warlike against war, and I urged H. to write a peace poem."

Finally established in Craigie House, as the children grew and his library enlarged, and guests, attracted by personal love and by his fame, became more numerous, he found the days almost overburdened with responsibilities. He wrote one day to Charles Sumner: "What you quote about the *père de famille* is pretty true. It is a difficult rôle to play; particularly when, as in my case, it is united with that of *oncle d'Amérique* and general superintendent of all the dilapidated and tumble-down foreigners who pass this way!" The regulation of

such a house in New England was far more difficult than it is at present, and Cambridge farther away from Boston, with its conveniences and privileges, than appeared. What anxieties if the hourly omnibus should be crowded! and what a pleasant slow ride into the far green land it seemed!

Nevertheless, this was his chosen home, his house beautiful, and such he made it, not only to his own eyes, but to the eyes of all who frequented it. The atmosphere of the man pervaded his surroundings and threw a glamour over everything. Even those who were most intimate at Craigie House felt the indescribable influence of tenderness, sweetness, and calm which filled the place. Neither Longfellow nor his wife was a brilliant talker; indeed, there were often periods of speechlessness; but in spite of mental absences, a habit of which he got the better in later years, one was always sure of being taken at one's best and of coming away with a sense of having "breathed a nobler air."

"Society and hospitality meant something real to him," his eldest daughter writes. "I cannot remember that there were ever any formal or obligatory occasions of entertainment. All who came were made welcome without any special preparation, and without any thought of personal inconvenience."

The decorations and splendors of the great

world neither existed nor were needed there. His orange-tree, "that busie plant," always stood in his study window, and remains, still cherished, to-day. The statuette of Goethe, to which he refers in "Hyperion," stands yet on the high desk at which he stood to write, and books are everywhere. Even closets supposed to be devoted to pails and dust-cloths "have three shelves for books and one for pails." In his own bedroom, where the exquisite portrait of his wife by Rowse hangs over the fireplace, there is a small bookcase near his bed which contains a choice collection of the English poets. Vaughan, Henry King, and others of that lovely company of the past. These were his most intimate friends. In the copy of Henry King, I found the following lines marked by him in "The Exequy:" —

> "Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed,
> Never to be disquieted!
> My last good-night! Thou wilt not wake,
> Till I thy fate shall overtake;
> Till age, or grief, or sickness, must
> Marry my body to the dust
> It so much loves."

His daughter says, "This library was carefully arranged by subjects; and although no catalogue was ever made, he was never at a loss where to look for any needed volume. His books were deeply beloved and tenderly handled."

Such was Craigie House and such was the poet's life within it from the beginning to the

end. "His poetry was not worked out from his brain," his daughter again writes, and who should know better than herself! "it was the blossoming of his inward life."

In a brief paper upon Longfellow written by Mr. William Winter I find the universal sentiment towards him more fully and tenderly expressed, perhaps, than elsewhere. Mr. Winter writes: "I had read every line he had then published; and such was the affection he inspired, even in a boyish mind, that on many a summer night I have walked several miles to his house, only to put my hand upon the latch of his gate, which he himself had touched. More than any one else among the many famous persons whom, since then, it has been my fortune to know, he aroused this feeling of mingled tenderness and reverence."

The description of his person, too, as given by Mr. Winter, seems to me clearer and closer to the truth than any other I have chanced to see.

"His dignity and grace, and the beautiful refinement of his countenance, together with his perfect taste in dress and the exquisite simplicity of his manners, made him the absolute ideal of what a poet should be. His voice, too, was soft, sweet, and musical, and, like his face, it had the innate charm of tranquillity. His eyes were blue-gray, very bright and brave, changeable under the influence of emotion (as afterward I

often saw), but mostly calm, grave, attentive, and gentle. The habitual expression of his face was not that of sadness ; and yet it was pensive. Perhaps it may be best described as that of serious and tender thoughtfulness. He had conquered his own sorrows thus far ; but the sorrows of others threw their shadow over him. . . . There was a strange touch of sorrowful majesty and prophetic fortitude commingled with the composure and kindness of his features. . . . His spontaneous desire, the natural instinct of his great heart, was to be helpful, — to lift up the lowly, to strengthen the weak, to bring out the best in every person, to dry every tear, and make every pathway smooth."

Although naturally of a buoyant disposition and fond of pleasure, Longfellow lived as far as possible from the public eye, especially during the last twenty years of his life. The following note gives a hint of his natural gayety, and details one of the many excuses by which he always declined to speak in public ; the one memorable exception being that beautiful occasion at Bowdoin, when he returned in age to the scenes of his youth and read to the crowd assembled there to do him reverence his poem entitled " Morituri Salutamus." After speaking of the reasons which must keep him from the Burns festival, he adds : —

" I am very sorry not to be there. You will have a delightful supper, or dinner, whichever

it is; and human breath enough expended to fill all the trumpets of Iskander for a month or more.

"I behold as in a vision a friend of ours, with his left hand under the tails of his coat, blowing away like mad; and alas! I shall not be there to applaud. All this you must do for me; and also eat my part of the haggis, which I hear is to grace the feast. This shall be your duty and your reward."

The reference in this note to the trumpets of Iskander is the only one in his letters regarding a poem which was a great favorite of his, by Leigh Hunt, called "The Trumpets of Doolkarnein." It is a poem worthy to make the reputation of a poet, and is almost a surprise even among the varied riches of Leigh Hunt. Many years after this note was written, Longfellow used to recall it to those lovers of poetry who had chanced to escape a knowledge of its beauty.

In spite of his dislike of grand occasions where he was a prominent figure, he was a keen lover of the opera and theatre. He was always the first to know when the opera season was to begin and to plan that our two houses might take a box together. He was always ready to hear "Lucia" or "Don Giovanni," and to make a festival time at the coming of Salvini or Neilson. There is a tiny notelet among his letters, with a newspaper paragraph neatly cut out and

pasted across the top, detailing the names of his party at a previous appearance at a theatre, a kind of notoriety which he particularly shuddered at; but in order to prove his determination in spite of everything, he writes below: —

"Now for 'Pinafore,' and another paragraph! Saturday afternoon would be a good time."

He easily caught the gayety of such occasions, and in the shadow of the curtains in the box would join in the singing or the recitative of the lovely Italian words with a true poet's delight.

The strange incidents of a life subject to the taskmaster Popularity are endless. One day he wrote: —

"A stranger called here and asked if Shakespeare lived in this neighborhood. I told him I knew no such person. Do you?"

Day by day he was besieged by every possible form of interruption which the ingenuity of the human brain could devise; but his patience and kindness, his determination to accept the homage offered him in the spirit of the giver, whatever discomfort it might bring himself, was continually surprising to those who observed him year by year. Mr. Fields wrote: "In his modesty and benevolence I am reminded of what Pope said of his friend Garth: 'He is the best of Christians without knowing it.'"

In one of Longfellow's notes he alludes humorously to the autograph nuisance: —

"Do you know how to apply properly for autographs? Here is a formula I have just received, on a postal card: —

"'DEAR SIR: As I am getting a collection of the autographs of all honorable and worthy men, and think yours such, I hope you will forfeit by next mail. Yours, etc.'"

And of that other nuisance, sitting for a portrait, he laughingly wrote one day: "'Two or three sittings' — that is the illusory phrase. Two or three sittings have become a standing joke." And yet how seldom he declined when it was in his power to serve an artist! His generosity knew no bounds.

When a refusal of any kind was necessary, it was wonderful to see how gently it was expressed. A young person having written from a western city to request him to write a poem for her class, he said: "I could not write it, but tried to say 'No' so softly that she would think it better than 'Yes.'"

He was distinguished by one grace which was almost peculiar to himself in the time in which he lived — his tenderness toward the undeveloped artist, the man or woman, youth or maid, whose heart was set upon some form of ideal expression, and who was living for that. Whether they possessed the power to distinguish themselves or not, to such persons he addressed himself with a sense of personal regard and kinship. When fame crowned the aspirant, no

one recognized more keenly the perfection of the work, but he seldom turned aside to attract the successful to himself. To the unsuccessful he lent the sunshine and overflow of his own life, as if he tried to show every day afresh that he believed noble pursuit and not attainment to be the purpose of our existence.

In a letter written in 1860 Longfellow says : —

"I have no end of poems sent me for candid judgment and opinion. Four cases on hand at this moment. A large folio came last night from a lady. It has been chasing me round the country ; has been in East Cambridge and in West Cambridge, and finally came by the hands of Policeman S—— to my house. I wish he had waived examination, and committed it (to memory). What shall I do ? These poems weaken me very much. It is like so much water added to the Spirit of Poetry."

And again he writes : —

"I received this morning a poem with the usual request to give 'my real opinion' of it. I give you one stanza."

After quoting the verse and giving the subject of the poem, he continues : —

"In his letter the author says, 'I did so much better on poetry than I thought I could as a beginner, that I really have felt a little proud of my poems.' He also sends me his photograph 'at sixty-five years of age,' and asks for mine 'and a poem' in return. I had much

rather send him these than my 'real opinion,' which I shall never make known to any man, except on compulsion and under the seal of secrecy."

His kindness and love of humor carried him through many a tedious interruption. He generously overlooked the fact of the subterfuges to which men and women resorted in order to get an interview, and to help them out made as much of their excuses as possible. Speaking one day of the persons who came to see him at Nahant, he said: "One man, a perfect stranger, came with an omnibus full of ladies. He descended, introduced himself, then returning to the omnibus took out all the ladies, one, two, three, four, and five, with a little girl, and brought them in. I entertained them to the best of my ability, and they stayed an hour. They had scarcely gone when a forlorn woman in black came up to me on the piazza, and asked for a dipper of water. 'Certainly,' I replied, and went to fetch her a glass. When I brought it she said, 'There is another woman just by the fence who is tired and thirsty; I will carry this to her.' But she struck her head as she passed through the window and spilled the water on the piazza. 'Oh, what have I done!' she said. 'If I had a floor-cloth, I would wipe it up.' 'Oh, no matter about the water,' I said, 'if you have not hurt yourself.' Then I went and brought more water for them both, and

sent them on their way, at last, refreshed and rejoicing." Once Longfellow drew out of his pocket a queer request for an autograph, saying "that the writer loved poetry in most any style, and would he please copy his 'Break, break, break' for the writer?" He also described in a note a little encounter in the street, on a windy day, with an elderly French gentleman in company with a young lady, who introduced them to each other. The Frenchman said: —

"'Monsieur, vous avez un fils qui fait de la peinture.'

"'Oui, monsieur.'

"'Il a du mérite. Il a beaucoup d'avenir.'

"'Ah,' said I, 'c'est une belle chose que l'avenir.'

"The elderly French gentleman rolled up the whites of his eyes and answered: —

"'Oui, c'est une belle chose; mais vous et moi, nous n'en avons pas beaucoup!'

"Superfluous information! — H. W. L."

It would be both an endless and unprofitable task to recall more of the curious experiences which popularity brought down upon him. There is a passage among Mr. Fields's notes, however, in which he describes an incident during Longfellow's last visit to England, which should not be overlooked. Upon his arrival, the Queen sent a graceful message, and invited him to Windsor Castle, where she

received him with all the honors; but he told me no foreign tribute touched him deeper than the words of an English hod-carrier, who came up to the carriage door at Harrow, and asked permission to take the hand of the man who had written the "Voices of the Night."

There was no break nor any change in the friendship with his publisher during the passing of the years; but in 1861 there is a note containing only a few words, which shows that a change had fallen upon Longfellow himself, a shadow which never could be lifted from his life. He writes: —

"My dear Fields, — I am sorry to say No instead of Yes; but so it must be. I can neither write nor think; and I have nothing fit to send you but my love, which you cannot put into the magazine."

For ever after the death of his wife he was a different man. His friends suffered for him and with him, but he walked alone through the valley of the shadow of death. "The blow fell entirely without warning, and the burial took place upon the anniversary of her marriage day. Some hand placed on her beautiful head, lovely and unmarred in death, a wreath of orange blossoms."

There was a break in his journal at this time. After many days he inscribed in it the following lines from Tennyson's poem addressed to James Spedding: —

"Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace.
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul!
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll."

His friends were glad when he turned to his work again, and still more glad when he showed a desire for their interest in what he was doing.

It was not long before he began to busy himself continuously with his translation of the "Divina Commedia," and in my diary of 1863, two years later, I find: —

"*August.* — A delightful day with Longfellow at Nahant. He read aloud the last part of his new volume of poems, in which each one of a party of friends tells a story. Ole Bull, Parsons, Monti, and several other characters are introduced."

"*September* 1st. — A cold storm by the seashore, but there was great pleasure in town in the afternoon. Longfellow, Paine, Dwight, and Fields went to hear Walcker play the new organ in the Music Hall for the first time since its erection. Afterwards they all dined together. Longfellow comes in from Cambridge every day, and sometimes twice a day, to see George Sumner, who is dying at the Massachusetts General Hospital."

"*September* 19th. — Longfellow and his friend George W. Greene, Charles Sumner, and Dempster the singer, came in for an early dinner. A very cosy, pleasant little party. The

afternoon was cool, and everybody was in kindly humor. Sumner shook his head sadly when the subject of the English iron-clads was mentioned. The talk prolonged itself upon the condition of the country. Longfellow's patriotism flamed. His feeling against England runs more deeply and strongly than he can find words to express. There is no prejudice nor childish partisanship, but it is hatred of the course she has pursued at this critical time. Later, in speaking of poetry and some of the less known and younger poets, Longfellow recalled some good passages in the poems of Bessie Parkes and Jean Ingelow. As evening approached we left the table and came to the library. There in the twilight Dempster sat at the piano and sang to us, beginning with Longfellow's poem called 'Children,' which he gave with a delicacy and feeling that touched every one. Afterwards he sang the 'Bugle Song' and 'Turn, Fortune,' which he had shortly before leaving England sung to Tennyson; and then after a pause he turned once more to the instrument and sang 'Break, break, break.' It was very solemn, and no one spoke when he had finished, only a deep sob was heard from the corner where Longfellow sat. Again and again, each time more uncontrolled, we heard the heartrending sounds. Presently the singer gave us another and less touching song, and before he ceased Longfellow rose and vanished from the room in the dim light without a word."

"*September* 27th. — Longfellow and Greene came in town in the evening for a walk and to see the moonlight in the streets, and afterwards to have supper. . . . He was very sad, and seemed to have grown an old man since a week ago. He was silent and absent-minded. On his previous visit he had borrowed Sidney's 'Arcadia' and Christina Rossetti's poems, but he had read neither of the books. He was overwhelmed with his grief, as if it were sometimes more than he could endure."

"*Sunday, October.* — Took five little children to drive in the afternoon, and stopped at Longfellow's. It was delightful to see their enjoyment and his. He took them out of the carriage in his arms and was touchingly kind to them. His love for children is not confined to his poetic expressions or to his own family; he is uncommonly tender and beautiful with them always."

I remember there was one little boy of whom he was very fond, and who came often to see him. One day the child looked earnestly at the long rows of books in the library, and at length said: —

"Have you got 'Jack the Giant-Killer'?"

Longfellow was obliged to confess that his library did not contain that venerated volume. The little boy looked very sorry, and presently slipped down from his knee and went away; but early the next morning Longfellow saw

him coming up the walk with something tightly clasped in his little fists. The child had brought him two cents with which he was to buy a "Jack the Giant-Killer" to be his own.

He did not escape the sad experiences of the war. His eldest son was severely wounded, and he also went, as did Dr. Holmes and other less famous but equally anxious parents, in search of his boy.

The diary continues: —

"*December* 14th. — Went to pass the afternoon with Longfellow, and found his son able to walk about a little. He described his own arrival at a railway station south of Washington. He found no one there but a rough-looking officer, who was walking up and down the platform. At each turn he regarded Longfellow, and at length came up, and taking his hand said:

"'Is this Professor Longfellow? It was I who translated "Hiawatha" into Russian. I have come to this country to fight for the Union.'"

In the year 1865 began those Wednesday evenings devoted to reading the new translation of Dante. They were delightful occasions. Lowell, Norton, Greene, Howells, and such other Dante scholars or intimate friends as were accessible, made up the circle of kindly critics. Those evenings increased in interest as the work progressed, and when it was ended and the notes written and read, it was proposed to

re-read the whole rather than to give up the weekly visit to Longfellow's house. In 1866 he wrote to Mr. Fields: —

"Greene is coming expressly to hear the last canto of 'Paradiso' to-morrow night, and will stay the rest of the week. I really hoped you would be here, but as you say nothing about it I begin to tremble. Perhaps, however, you are only making believe and will take us by surprise. So I shall keep your place for you.

"This is not to be the end of all things. I mean to begin again in September with the dubious and difficult passages; and if you are not in too much of a hurry to publish, there is still a long vista of pleasant evenings stretching out before us. We can pull them out like a spy-glass. I am shutting up now to recommence the operation."

In December of the same year he wrote: —

"The first meeting of the Dante Club Redivivus is on Wednesday next. Come and be bored. Please not to mention the subject to any one yet awhile, as we are going to be very quiet about it."

"*January*, 1867. — Dante Club at Longfellow's again. They are revising the whole book with the minutest care. Lowell's accuracy is surprising and of great value to the work; also Norton's criticisms. Longfellow stands apart at his desk taking notes and making corrections, though of course no one can know yet what he accepts."

Longfellow's true life was that of a scholar and a dreamer; everything else was a duty, however pleasurable or beautiful the experience might become in his gentle acceptation. He was seldom stimulated to external expression by others. Such excitement as he could express again was always self-excitement; anything external rendered him at once a listener and an observer. For this reason it is peculiarly difficult to give any idea of his lovely presence and character to those who have not known him. He did not speak in epigrams. It could not be said of him, —

> "His mouth he could not ope,
> But out there flew a trope."

Yet there was an exquisite tenderness and effluence from his presence which was more humanizing and elevating than the eloquence of many others.

One quotation from a letter to Charles Sumner is too characteristic to be omitted even in the slightest sketch of Longfellow. He writes: "You are hard at work; and God bless you in it. In every country the 'dangerous classes' are those who do no work; for instance, the nobility in Europe and the slaveholders here. It is evident that the world needs a new nobility, — not of the gold medal and *sangre azul* order; not of the blood that is blue because it stagnates, but of the red arterial blood that circulates, and has heart in it and life and labor."

Speaking one day of his own reminiscences, Longfellow said, that "however interesting such things were in conversation, he thought they seldom contained legitimate matter for book-making; and ——'s life of a poet, just then printed, was, he thought, peculiarly disagreeable chiefly because of the unjustifiable things related of him by others. This strain of thought brought to his mind a call he once made with a letter of introduction, when a youth in Paris, upon Jules Janin. The servant said her master was at home, and he was ushered immediately into a small parlor, in one corner of which was a winding stairway leading into the room above. Here he waited a moment while the maid carried in his card, and then returned immediately to say he could go up. In the upper room sat Janin under the hands of a barber, his abundant locks shaken up in wild confusion, in spite of which he received his guest, quite undisturbed, as if it were a matter of course. There was no fire in the room; but the fireplace was heaped with letters and envelopes, and a trail of the same reached from his desk to the grate. After a brief visit Longfellow was about to withdraw, when Janin detained him, saying: 'What can I do for you in Paris? Whom would you like to see?'

"'I should like to know Madame George Sand.'

"'Unfortunately that is impossible! I have just quarreled with Madame Sand!'

"'Ah! then, Alexandre Dumas, — I should like to take him by the hand!'

"'I have quarreled with him also, but no matter! *Vous perdriez vos illusions.*'

"However, he invited me to dine the next day, and I had a singular experience; but I shall not soon forget the way in which he said, 'vous perdriez vos illusions.'

"When I arrived on the following day I found the company consisted of his wife and himself, a little red-haired man who was rather quiet and cynical, and myself. Janin was amusing and noisy, and carried the talk on swimmingly with much laughter. Presently he began to say hard things about women, when his wife looked up reproachfully and said, 'Déjà, Jules!' During dinner a dramatic author arrived with his play, and Janin ordered him to be shown in. He treated the poor fellow brutally, who in turn bowed low to the great power. He did not even ask him to take a chair. Madame Janin did so, however, and kindly, too. The author supplicated the critic to attend the first appearance of his play. Janin would not promise to go, but put him off indefinitely, and presently the poor man went away. He tingled all over with indignation at the treatment the man received, but Janin looked over to his wife, saying, 'Well, my dear, I treated this one pretty well, did n't I?'

"'Better than sometimes, Jules,' she answered."

Altogether it was a strange scene to the young American observer.

"*July*, 1867. — Passed the day at Nahant. As Longfellow sat on the piazza wrapped in his blue cloth cloak, he struck me for the first time as wearing a venerable aspect. Before dinner he gathered wild roses to adorn the table, and even gave a careful touch himself to the arrangement of the wines and fruits. He was in excellent spirits, full of wit and lively talk. Speaking of the use and misuse of words, he quoted Chateaubriand's mistake (afterwards corrected) in his translation of 'Paradise Lost,' when he rendered

"'Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God,'

as

"'Le ruisseau de Siloa qui coulait rapidement.'"

In talking about natural differences in character and temperament, he said of his own children that he agreed with one of the old English divines who said, "Happy is that household wherein Martha still reproves Mary!"

In February, 1868, it was decided that Longfellow should go to Europe with his family. He said that the first time he went abroad it was to see places alone and not persons; the second time he saw a few persons, and so pleasantly combined the two; he thought once that on a third visit he should prefer to see persons only; but all that was changed now. He had

returned to the feeling of his youth. He was eager to seek out quiet places and wayside nooks, where he might rest in retirement and enjoy the consecrated memorials of Europe undisturbed.

The following year found him again in Cambridge, refreshed by his absence. The diary continues: "He has been trying to further the idea of buying some of the lowlands in Cambridge for the colleges. If this can be done, it will save much future annoyance to the inhabitants from wretched hovels and bad odors, beside holding the land for a beautiful possession forever. He has given a good deal of money himself. This might be called 'his latest work.'"

"*January*, 1870. — Longfellow and Bayard Taylor came to dine. Longfellow talked of translators and translating. He advanced the idea that the English, from the insularity of their character, were incapable of making a perfect translation. Americans, French, and Germans, he said, have much larger adaptability to and sympathy in the thought of others. He would not hear Chapman's Homer or anything else quoted on the other side, but was zealous in enforcing this argument. He anticipates much from Taylor's version of 'Faust.' All this was strikingly interesting, as showing how his imagination wrought with him, because he was arguing from his own theory of the capacity of

the races and in the face of his knowledge of the best actual translations existing to-day, the result of the scholarship of England.

"Longfellow speaks of difficulty in sleeping. In his college days and later he had the habit of studying until midnight and rising at six in the morning, finding his way as soon as possible to his books. Possibly this habit still prevents him from getting sufficient rest. However light may be the literature in which he indulges before going to bed, some chance thought may strike him as he goes up the stairs with the bedroom candle in his hand which will preclude all possibility of sleep until long after midnight.

"His account of Sainte-Beuve during his last visit to Europe was an odd little drama. He had grown excessively fat, and could scarcely move. He did not attempt to rise from his chair as Longfellow entered, but motioned him to a seat by his side. Talking of Victor Hugo and Lamartine, 'Take them for all in all, which do you prefer?' asked Longfellow.

"'Charlatan pour charlatan, je crois que je préfère Monsieur de Lamartine,' was the reply.

"Longfellow amused me by making two epigrams: —

> "'What is autobiography?
> It is what a biography ought to be.'

"And again: —

> "'When you ask one friend to dine,
> Give him your best wine!
> When you ask two,
> The second best will do!'

"He brought in with him two poems translated from Platen's 'Night Songs.' They are very beautiful.

"'What dusky splendors of song there are in King Alfred's new volume,' he said. 'It is always a delight to get anything new from him. His "Holy Grail" and Lowell's "Cathedral" are enough for a holiday, and make this one notable.'"

When Longfellow talked freely as at this dinner, it was difficult to remember that he was not really a talker. The natural reserve of his nature made it sometimes impossible for him to express himself in ordinary intercourse. He never truly made a confidant of anybody except his Muse.

"I never thought," he wrote about this time, "that I should come back to this kind of work." He was busying himself with collecting and editing "The Poems of Places." "It transports me to my happiest years, and the contrast is too painful to think of." And again in calmer mood: "The 'ruler of the inverted year' (whatever that may mean) has, you perceive, returned again, like a Bourbon from banishment, and is having it all his own way, and it is not a pleasant way. Very well, one can sit by the fire and read, and hear the wind roar in the chimney, and write to one's friends, and sign one's self 'yours faithfully,' or as in the present instance, 'yours always.'"

His sympathetic nature was ever ready to share and further the gayety of others. He wrote one evening: —

"I have been kept at home by a little dancing-party to-night. . . . I write this arrayed in my dress-coat with a rose in my buttonhole, a circumstance, I think, worth mentioning. It reminds me of Buffon, who used to array himself in his full dress for writing 'Natural History.' Why should we not always do it when we write letters? We should, no doubt, be more courtly and polite, and perhaps say handsome things to each other. It was said of Villemain that when he spoke to a lady he seemed to be presenting her a bouquet. Allow me to present you this postscript in the same polite manner, to make good my theory of the rose in the buttonhole."

How delightful it is to catch the intoxication of the little festival in this way. In his endeavor to further the gayeties of his children he had received a reflected light and life which his love for them had helped to create.

"*December* 14, 1870. — Taylor's 'Faust' is finished, and Longfellow is coming with other friends to dinner to celebrate the ending of the work. . . .

"A statuette of Goethe was on the table. Longfellow said Goethe never liked the statue of himself by Rauch, from which this copy was made. He preferred above all others a bust of

himself by a Swiss sculptor, a copy of which Taylor owns. He could never understand, he continued, the story of that unpleasant interview between Napoleon and Goethe. Eckermann says Goethe liked it, but Longfellow thought the emperor's manner of address had a touch of insolence in it. The haunts of Goethe in Weimar were pleasantly recalled by both Longfellow and Taylor, to whom they were familiar; also that strange portrait of him taken standing at a window, and looking out over Rome, in which nothing but his back can be seen.

"I find it impossible to recall what Longfellow said, but he scintillated all the evening. It was an occasion such as he loved best. His *jeux d'esprit* flew rapidly right and left, often setting the table in a roar of laughter, a most unusual thing with him."

There was evidently no such pleasure to Longfellow as that of doing kindnesses. One of many notes bearing on such subjects belongs to this year, and begins: —

"A thousand thanks for your note and its inclosure. There goes a gleam of sunshine into a dark house, which is always pleasant to think of. I have not yet got the senator's sunbeam to add to it; but as soon as I do, both shall go shining on their way."

"*January*, 1871. — Dined at Longfellow's, and afterwards went upstairs to see an inter-

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esting collection of East Indian curiosities. Passing through his dressing-room, I was struck with the likeness of his private rooms to those of a German student or professor ; a Goethean aspect of simplicity and space everywhere, with books put in the nooks and corners and all over the walls. It is surely a most attractive house ! "

Again I find a record of a dinner at Cambridge : " The day was springlike, and the air full of the odors of fresh blossoms. As we came down over the picturesque old staircase, he was standing with a group of gentlemen near by, and I heard him say aloud unconsciously, in a way peculiar to himself, 'Ah, now we shall see the ladies come downstairs ! ' Nothing escapes his keen observation — as delicate as it is keen."

And in the same vein the journal rambles on : —

" *Friday.* — Longfellow came into luncheon at one o'clock. He was looking very well ; . . . his beautiful eyes fairly shone. He had been at Manchester-by-the-Sea the day before to dine with the Curtises. Their truly romantic and lovely place had left a pleasant picture in his mind. Coming away by the train, he passed in Chelsea a new soldiers' monument which suggested an epigram to him that he said, laughingly, would suit any of the thousand of such monuments to be seen about the country. He began somewhat in this style : —

"'The soldier asked for bread,
But they waited till he was dead,
And gave him a stone instead,
Sixty and one feet high!'

"We all returned to Cambridge together, and, being early for our own appointment elsewhere, he carried us into his library and read aloud 'The Marriage of Lady Wentworth.' E——, with pretty girlish ways and eyes like his own, had let us into the old mansion by the side door, and then lingered to ask if she might be allowed to stay and hear the reading too. He, consenting, laughingly, lighted a cigar and soon began. His voice in reading was sweet and melodious, and it was touched with tremulousness, although this was an easier poem to read aloud than many others, being strictly narrative. It is full of New England life and is a beautiful addition to his works. He has a fancy for making a volume, or getting some one else to do it, of his favorite ghost stories, 'The Flying Dutchman,' 'Peter Rugg,' and a few others."

On another occasion the record says: —

"Passed the evening at Longfellow's. As we lifted the latch and entered the hall door, we saw him reading an old book by his study lamp. It was the 'Chansons d'Espagne,' which he had just purchased at what he called the massacre of the poets; in other words, at the sale that day of the library of William H. Prescott. He

was rather melancholy, he said: first, on account of the sacrifice and separation of that fine library; also because he is doubtful about his new poem, the one on the life of our Saviour. He says he has never before felt so cast down.

"What an orderly man he is! Well-ordered, I should have written. Diary, accounts, scraps, books, — everything where he can put his hand upon it in a moment."

"*December*, 1871.— Saturday Mr. Longfellow came in town and went with us to hear twelve hundred school children sing a welcome to the Russian Grand Duke in the Music Hall. It was a fine sight, and Dr. Holmes's hymn, written for the occasion, was noble and inspiring. Just before the Grand Duke came in I saw a smile creep over Longfellow's face. 'I can never get over the ludicrousness of it,' he said. 'All this array and fuss over one man!' He came home with us afterwards, and lingered awhile by the fire. He talked of Russian literature, — its modernness, and said he had sent us a delightful novel by Tourguéneff, 'Liza,' in which we should find charming and vivid glimpses of landscape and life like those seen from a carriage window. We left him alone in the library for a while, and returning found him amusing himself over the 'Ingoldsby Legends.' He was reading the 'Coronation of Victoria,' and laughing over Count Froganoff, who could not get 'prog enough,' and was 'found eating

underneath the stairs.' He wants to have a dinner for Bayard Taylor, whose coming is always the signal for a series of small festivities. His own 'Divine Tragedy' is just out, and everybody speaks of its simplicity and beauty."

"*April.* — In the evening Longfellow came in town for the purpose of hearing a German gentleman read an original poem, and he persuaded me to go with him. The reader twisted his face up into frightful knots, and delivered his poem with vast apparent satisfaction to himself if not to his audience. It was fortunate on the whole that the production was in a foreign tongue, because it gave us the occupation, at least, of trying to understand the words, — the poem itself possessing not the remotest interest for either of us. It was in the old sentimental German style familiar to the readers of that literature. Longfellow amused me as we walked home by imitating the sing-song voice we had been following all the evening. He also recited in the original that beautiful little poem by Platen, 'In der Nacht, in der Nacht,' in a most delightful manner. 'Ah,' he said, 'to translate a poem properly it must be done into the metre of the original, and Bryant's "Homer," fine as it is, has this great fault, that it does not give the music of the poem itself.' He came in and took a cigar before walking home over the bridge alone. . . .

"Emerson asked Longfellow at dinner about

his last visit to England, of Ruskin and other celebrities. Longfellow is always reticent upon such subjects, but he was eager to tell us how very much he had enjoyed Mr. Ruskin. He said it was one of the most surprising things in the world to see the quiet, gentlemanly way in which Ruskin gave vent to his extreme opinions. It seems to be no effort to him, but as if it were a matter of course that every one should give expression to the faith that is in him in the same unvarnished way as he does himself, not looking for agreement, but for conversation and discussion. 'It is strange,' Ruskin said, 'being considered so much out of harmony with America as I am, that the two Americans I have known and loved best, you and Norton, should give me such a feeling of friendship and repose.' Longfellow then spoke of Mrs. Matthew Arnold, whom he liked very much, — thought her, as he said, 'a most lovely person.' Also of the 'beautiful Lady Herbert,' as one of the most delightful of women. . . .

"Longfellow came in to an early dinner to meet Mr. Joseph Jefferson, Mr. William Warren, and Dr. Holmes. He said he felt like one on a journey. He had left home early in the morning, had been sight-seeing in Boston all day, was to dine and go to the theatre with us afterwards. The talk naturally turned upon the stage. Longfellow said he thought Mr. Charles Mathews was entirely unjust in his criticisms

upon Mr. Forrest's King Lear. He considered Mr. Forrest's rendering of the part as very fine and close to nature. He could not understand why Mr. Mathews should underrate it as he did. Longfellow showed us a book given him by Charles Sumner. In it was an old engraving (from a painting by Giulio Clovio) of the moon, in which Dante is walking with his companion. He said it was a most impressive picture to him. He knew it in the original ; also there is a very good copy in the Cambridge Library among the copies of illuminated manuscripts."

There is a little note belonging to this period full of poetic feeling and giving more than a hint at the wearifulness of interrupting visitors : —

"I send you the pleasant volume I promised you yesterday. It is a book for summer moods by the seaside, but will not be out of place on a winter night by the fireside. . . . You will find an allusion to the 'blue borage flowers' that flavor the claret-cup. I know where grows another kind of bore-age that embitters the goblet of life. I can spare you some of this herb, if you have room for it in your garden or your garret. It is warranted to destroy all peace of mind, and finally to produce softening of the brain and insanity.

"'Better juice of vine
Than berry wine!
Fire! fire! steel, oh, steel!
Fire! fire! steel and fire!'"

The following, written in the spring of the same year, gives a hint of what a festival season it was to him while the lilacs which surround his house were in bloom: —

"Here is the poem, copied for you by your humble scribe. I found it impossible to crowd it into a page of note paper. Come any pleasant morning, as soon after breakfast or before as you like, and we will go on with the 'Michael Angelical' manuscript. I shall not be likely to go to town while the lilacs are in bloom."

The rambling diary continues: "To-day Longfellow sent us half a dozen bottles of wine, and after them came a note saying he had sent them off without finding time to label them. 'They are wine of Avignon,' he added, 'and should bear this inscription from Redi: —

"'Benedetto
Quel claretto
Che si spilla in Avignone.'"

About this period Longfellow invited an old friend, who had fallen into extreme helplessness from ill health, to come and make him a visit. It was a great comfort to his friend, a scholar like himself, "to nurse the dwindling faculty of joy" in such companionship, and he lingered many weeks in the sunshine of the old house. Longfellow's patience and devoted care for this friend of his youth was a signal example of what a true and constant heart may do unconsciously, in giving expression and recognition to the bond

of a sincere friendship. Long after his friend was unable to rise from his chair without assistance or go unaccompanied to his bedroom, Longfellow followed the lightest unexpressed wish with his sympathetic vision and performed the smallest offices unbidden. "Longfellow, will you turn down my coat collar?" I have heard him say in a plaintive way, and it was a beautiful lesson to see the quick and cheerful response which would follow many a like suggestion.

In referring to this trait of his character, I find among the notes made by Mr. Fields on Longfellow: "One of the most occupied of all our literary men and scholars, he yet finds time for the small courtesies of existence, those minor attentions that are so often neglected. One day, seeing him employed in cutting something from a newspaper, I asked him what he was about. 'Oh,' said he, 'here is a little paragraph speaking kindly of our poor old friend Blank; you know he seldom gets a word of praise, poor fellow, nowadays; and thinking he might not chance to see this paper, I am snipping out the paragraph to mail to him this afternoon. I know that even these few lines of recognition will make him happy for hours, and I could not bear to think he might perhaps miss seeing these pleasant words so kindly expressed.'"

"*May Day*, 1876. — Longfellow dined with us. He said during the dinner, when we heard

a blast of wintry wind howling outside, 'This is May day enough; it does not matter to us how cold it is outside.' He was inclined to be silent, for there were other and brilliant talkers at the table, one of whom said to him in a pause of the conversation, 'Longfellow, tell us about yourself; you never talk about yourself.' 'No,' said Longfellow gently, 'I believe I never do.' 'And yet,' continued the first speaker eagerly, 'you confessed to me once' — 'No,' said Longfellow, laughing, 'I think I never did.'"

And here is a tiny note of compliment, graceful as a poet's note should be:—

"I have just received your charming gift, your note and the stately lilies; but fear you may have gone from home before my thanks can reach you.

"How beautiful they are, these lilies of the field; and how like American women! Not because 'they neither toil nor spin,' but because they are elegant and 'born in the purple.'"

There is a brief record in 1879 of a visit to us in Manchester-by-the-Sea. Just before he left he said, "After I am gone to-day, I want you to read Schiller's poem of the 'Ring of Polycrates,' if you do not recall it too distinctly. You will know then how I feel about my visit." He repeated also some English hexameters he had essayed from the first book of the Iliad. He believes the work may be still more perfectly done than has ever yet been achieved. We

drove to Gloucester wrapped in a warm sea fog. His enjoyment of the green woods and the sea breeze was delightful to watch. "Ay me! ay me! woods may decay," but who can dare believe such life shall cease from the fair world!

Seeing the Portland steamer pass one night, a speck on the horizon, bearing as he knew his daughter and her husband, he watched it long, then said, "Think of a part of yourself being on that moving speck."

The Sunday following that visit he wrote from Portland: —

"Church bells are ringing; clatter of church-going feet on the pavement; boys crying 'Boston Herald;' voices of passing men and women: these are the sounds that come to me at this upper window, looking down into the street.

"I contrast it all with last Sunday's silence at Manchester-by-the-Sea, and remember my delightful visit there. Then comes the thought of the moonlight and the music and Shelley's verses, —

> "'As the moon's soft splendor
> O'er the faint, cold starlight of heaven
> Is thrown;'

and so on

> "'Of some world far from ours,
> Where moonlight and music and feeling
> Are one.'

"How beautiful this song would sound if set to music by Mrs. Bell and chanted by her in the twilight."

Later he enclosed the song, which is as follows, and I venture to reprint it because it is seldom found among Shelley's poems: —

AN ARIETTE FOR MUSIC.

To a lady singing to her accompaniment on the guitar.

As the moon's soft splendor
O'er the faint, cold starlight of heaven
Is thrown,
So thy voice most tender
To the strings without soul has given
Its own.

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later
To-night;
No leaf will be shaken,
Whilst the dews of thy melody scatter
Delight.

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with thy sweet voice revealing
A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

He added: —

"I find the song in my scrapbook, and send it to save you the trouble of hunting for it.

"H. W. L."

It was first reprinted in "The Waif," a thin volume of selections published by Longfellow many years ago. "The Waif" and "The Estray" preserved many a lovely poem from oblivion, till it should find its place at length among its fellows.

Already in 1875 we find Longfellow at work upon his latest collection of poems, which he called "Poems of Places." It was a much more laborious and unrewarding occupation than he had intended, and he was sometimes weary of his self-imposed task. He wrote at this period: —

No politician ever sought for Places with half the zeal that I do. Friend and Foe alike have to give Place to

Yours truly, H. W. L.

Again he says: —

"What evil demon moved me to make this collection of 'Poems of Places'? Could I have foreseen the time it would take, and the worry and annoyance it would bring with it, I never would have undertaken it. The worst of it is, I have to write pieces now and then to fill up gaps."

More and more his old friends grew dear to him as the years passed and "the goddess Neuralgia," as he called his malady, kept him chiefly at home. He wrote in 1877: —

"When are you coming back from your Cottage on the Cliffs? The trees on the Common and the fountains are calling for you.

"'Thee, Tityrus, even the pine-trees,
The very fountains, the very
Copses are calling.'

Perhaps also your creditors. At all events I am, who am your debtor."

The days were fast approaching when the old things must pass away. He wrote tenderly: —

"I am sorry to hear that you are not quite yourself. I sympathize with you, for I am somebody else. It is the two W's, Work and Weather, that are playing the mischief with us. . . . You must not open a book; you must not even look at an inkstand. These are both contraband articles, upon which we have to pay heavy duties. We cannot smuggle them in. Nature's custom-house officers are too much on the alert."

In 1880 he again wrote, describing the wedding of the daughter of an old friend: —

"A beautiful wedding it was; an ideal village wedding, in a pretty church, and the Windmill Cottage of our friend resplendent with autumnal flowers. In one of the rooms there was a tea-kettle hanging on a crane in the fireplace.

"So begins a new household. But Miss Neilson's death has saddened me, and yesterday Mrs. Horsford came with letters from Norway, giving particulars of Ole Bull's last days, his death and burial. The account was very touching. All Bergen's flags at half-mast; telegrams from the King; funeral oration by Björnson. The dear old musician was carried from his island to the mainland in a steamer, followed

by a long line of other steamers. No Viking ever had such a funeral."

And here the extracts from letters and journals must cease. It was a golden sunset, in spite of the increasing infirmities which beset him; for he could never lose his pleasure in making others happy, and only during the few last days did he lose his own happiness among his books and at his desk. The influence his presence gave out to others, of calm good cheer and tenderness, made those who knew him feel that he possessed, in larger measure than others, what Jean Paul Richter calls "a heavenly unfathomableness which makes man godlike, and love toward him infinite." Indeed, this "heavenly unfathomableness" was a strong characteristic of his nature, and the gracious silence in which he often dwelt gave a rare sense of song without words. Therefore, perhaps on that day when we gathered around the form through which his voice was never again to utter itself, and heard his own words repeated upon the air saying, "Weep not, my friends! rather rejoice with me. I shall not feel the pain, but shall be gone, and you shall have another friend in heaven," it was impossible not to believe that he was with us still, the central spirit, comforting and uplifting the circle of those who were most dear to him.

GLIMPSES OF EMERSON

GLIMPSES OF EMERSON

THE perfect consistency of a truly great life, where inconsistencies of speech become at once harmonized by the beauty of the whole nature, gives even to a slight incident the value of a bit of mosaic which, if omitted, would leave a gap in the picture. Therefore we never tire of "Whisperings" and "Talks" and "Walks" and "Letters" relating to the friends of our imagination, if not of our fireside; and in so far as such fragments bring men and women of achievement nearer to our daily lives, without degrading them, they warm and cheer us with something of their own beloved and human presence.

From this point of view the publication of so many of these side lights on the lives of what Emerson himself calls "superior people," is easily accounted for, and the following glimpses will only confirm what he expresses of such natures when he says, "In all the superior people I have met I notice directness, truth spoken more truly, as if everything of obstruction, of malformation, had been trained away."

In reading the correspondence between Car-

lyle and Emerson, few readers could fail to be impressed with the generosity shown by Emerson in giving his time and thought without stint to the publication of Carlyle's books in this country. Nor was this the single instance of his devotion to the advancement of his friends. In a brief memoir, lately printed, of Jones Very, as an introduction to a collection of his poems, we find a like record there.

After the death of Thoreau, Emerson spared no trouble to himself that his friend's papers might be properly presented to the reading world. He wrote to his publisher, Mr. Fields: "I send all the poems of Thoreau which I think ought to go with the letters. These are the best verses, and no other whole piece quite contents me. I think you must be content with a little book, since it is so good. I do not like to print either the prison piece or the John Brown with these clear sky-born letters and poems." After all his labor and his care, however, it was necessary to hold consultation with Thoreau's sister, and she could not find it in her heart to leave out some of the tender personalities which had grown more dear to her since her brother's death, and which had been omitted in the selection. She said that she was sure Mr. Emerson was not pleased at the restorations she made after his careful work of elimination was finished, but he was too courteous and kind to say much, or to insist on his own

way; he only remarked, "You have spoiled my Greek statue." Neither was he himself altogether contented with his work, and shortly afterward said he would like to include "The Maiden in the East," partly because it was written of Mrs. W——n, and partly because other persons liked it so well.

"I looked over the poems again and again," he said, "and at last reserved but ten, finding some blemish in all the others which prevented them from seeming perfect to me. How grand is his poem about the mountains! As it is said of Goethe that he never spoke of the stars but with respect, so we may say of Thoreau and the mountains." It could hardly be expected of Thoreau's sister to sympathize with such a tribunal, especially when the same clear judgment was brought to bear upon the letters. Even touching the contract for publication he was equally painstaking — far more so than for his own affairs. He wrote, "I inclose the first form of contract, as you requested, with the alterations suggested by Miss Thoreau." After this follows a careful reiteration in his own handwriting of such alterations as were desired.

The early loss of Thoreau and his love for him were, I had believed, the root and flower which brought forth fruit in his noble discourse on "Immortality;" but Miss Emerson generously informs me that I am mistaken in this idea. "Most of its framework," she says, "was

written seven or eight years earlier and delivered in September, 1855. Some parts of it he may have used at Mr. Thoreau's funeral and some sentences of it may have been written then, but the main work was done long before, and it was enlarged twice afterwards."

Happy were they who heard him speak at the funeral of Henry Thoreau. At whatever period he first framed his intuitions upon the future in prose, on that day a light was flashed upon him which he reflected again upon the soul of his listeners, and to them it seemed that a new-born glory had descended. Whatever words are preserved upon the printed page, the spirit of what was given on that day cannot be reproduced. He wrote, the day after Thoreau's death, to Mr. Fields: "Come to-morrow and bring —— to my house. We will give you a very early dinner. Mr. Channing is to write a hymn or dirge for the funeral, which is to be from the church at three o'clock. I am to make an address, and probably Mr. Alcott may say something." This was the only announcement, the only time for preparation. Thoreau's body lay in the porch, and his townspeople filled the church, but Emerson made the simple ceremony one never to be forgotten by those who were present. Respecting the publication of this address I find the following entry in a diary of the time: "We have been waiting for Mr. Emerson to publish his new volume,

containing his address upon Henry Thoreau; but he is careful of words, and finds many to be considered again and again, until it is almost impossible to extort a manuscript from his hands."

There is a brief note among the few letters I have found concerning the poetry of some other writer whose name does not appear, but in the publication of whose work Emerson was evidently interested. He writes: "I have made the fewest changes I could. So do not shock the *amour propre* of the poet, and yet strike out the bad words. You must, please, if it comes to question, keep my agency out of sight, and he will easily persuade himself that your compositor has grown critical, and struck out the rough syllables."

Emerson stood, as it were, the champion of American letters, and whatever found notice at all challenged his serious scrutiny. The soul and purpose must be there; he must find one line to win his sympathy, and then it was given with a whole heart. He said one day at breakfast that he had found a young man! A youth in the far West had written him, and inclosed some verses, asking for his criticism. Among them was the following line, which Emerson said proved him to be a poet, and he should watch his career in future with interest:

"Life is a flame whose splendor hides its base."

We can imagine the kindly letter which answered the appeal, and how the future of that youth was brightened by it. "Emerson's young man" was a constant joke among his friends, because he was continually filled with a large hope; and his friend of the one line was not by any means his only discovery.

His feeling respecting the literary work of men nearer to him was not always one of satisfaction. When Hawthorne's volume of "English Sketches" was printed, he said, "It is pellucid, but not deep;" and he cut out the dedication and letter to Franklin Pierce, which offended him. The two men were so unlike that it seemed a strange fate which brought them together in one small town. An understanding of each other's methods or points of view was an impossibility. Emerson spoke once with an intimate friend of the distance which separated Hawthorne and himself. They were utterly at variance upon politics and every theory of life.

Mr. Fields was suggesting to Emerson one day that he should give a series of lectures, when, as they were discussing the topics to be chosen, Emerson said: "One shall be on the Doctrine of Leasts, and one on the Doctrine of Mosts; one shall be about Brook Farm, for ever since Hawthorne's ghastly and untrue account of that community, in his 'Blithedale Romance,' I have desired to give what I think the true account of it."

The sons of Henry James, Senior, being at school in Concord for a period, Emerson invited Mr. James, who had gone to visit his boys, to stay over and be present at one of Mr. Alcott's conversations, which were already "an institution" of the time. Mr. Alcott began to speak upon subjects which interested Mr. James; and the latter, not understanding, naturally enough, that these so-called "Conversations" were in truth monologues, replied to Mr. Alcott in his own striking style. Finding the audience alive to what he wished to say, he continued, and "did the talking himself." Miss Mary Emerson, Emerson's well-beloved aunt, the extraordinary original of one of his most delightful papers, was present. She had never met Mr. James before, and became greatly excited by some of the opinions he advanced. She thought he often used the word "religion," when, to her mind, he appeared to mean, sometimes "dogmatism" and sometimes, "ecclesiasticism."

She bided her time, though a storm had gathered within her. At last, when a momentary silence fell and no one appeared ready to refute certain opinions advanced by Mr. James, "Amita" rose, took a chair, and, placing it in front of him, exclaimed, "Let me confront the monster!" The discussion was then renewed, excited by this sally of "Amita's" wit, and the company parted with a larger understanding of the subject and greater appreciation of each

other. "It was a glorious occasion for those who love a battle of words," said one who was present. Mr. James delighted his host by his remarks upon the character of the beloved "Amita."

Mr. Emerson had his own reservations about Dickens. He could not easily forgive any one who made him laugh immoderately. The first reading of "Dr. Marigold" in Boston was an exciting occasion, and Emerson was invited to "assist." After the reading he sat talking until a very late hour, for he was taken by surprise at the novelty and artistic perfection of the performance. His usual calm had quite broken down under it; he had laughed as if he might crumble to pieces, his face wearing an expression of absolute pain; indeed, the scene was so strange that it was mirth-provoking to those who were near. But when we returned home he questioned and pondered much upon Dickens himself. Finally he said: "I am afraid he has too much talent for his genius; it is a fearful locomotive to which he is bound, and he can never be freed from it nor set at rest. You see him quite wrong evidently, and would persuade me that he is a genial creature, full of sweetness and amenities, and superior to his talents; but I fear he is harnessed to them. He is too consummate an artist to have a thread of nature left. He daunts me. I have not the key." When Mr. Fields came in he repeated: "——

would persuade me that Dickens is a man easy to communicate with, sympathetic and accessible to his friends; but her eyes do not see clearly in this matter, I am sure!"

The tenor of his way was largely stayed by admiration and appreciation of others, often far beyond their worth. He gilded his friends with his own sunshine. He wrote to his publisher: "Give me leave to make you acquainted with ——" (still unknown to fame), "who has written a poem which he now thinks of publishing. It is, in my judgment, a serious and original work of great and various merit, with high intellectual power in accosting the questions of modern thought, full of noble sentiment, and especially rich in fancy, and in sensibility to natural beauty. I remember that while reading it I thought it a welcome proof, and still more a prediction, of American culture. I need not trouble you with any cavils I made on the manuscript I read, as —— assures me that he has lately revised and improved the original draft. I hope you will like the poem as heartily as I did."

I find a record of one very warm day in Boston in July when, in spite of the heat, Mr. Emerson came to dine with us: —

"He talked much of Forceythe Willson, whose genius he thought akin to Dante's, and says E—— H—— agrees with him in this, or possibly suggested it, she having been one of

the best readers and lovers of Dante outside the reputed scholars. 'But he is not fertile. A man at his time should be doing new things.' 'Yes,' said ——, 'I fear he never will do much more.' 'Why, how old is he?' asked Emerson; and hearing he was about thirty-five, he replied, with a smile, 'There is hope till forty-five.' He spoke also of Tennyson and Carlyle as the two men connected with literature in England who were most satisfactory to meet, and better than their books. His respect for literature in these degenerate days is absolute. It is religion and life, and he reiterates this in every possible form. Speaking of Jones Very, he said he seemed to have no right to his rhymes; they did not sing to him, but he was divinely led to them, and they always surprised you."

We were much pleased and amused at his quaint expressions of admiration for a mutual friend in New York at whose hospitable house we had all received cordial entertainment. He said: "The great Hindoo, Hātim Tayi, was nothing by the side of such hospitality as hers. Hātim Tayi would soon lose his reputation." His appreciation of the poems of H. H. was often expressed. He made her the keynote of a talk one day upon the poetry of women. The poems entitled "Joy," "Thought," "Ariadne," he liked especially. Of Mrs. Hemans he found many poems which still survive, and he believed must always live.

Matthew Arnold was one of the minds and men to whom he constantly reverted with pleasure. Every traveler was asked for the last news of him; and when an English professor connected with the same university as Arnold, whom Emerson had been invited to meet, was asked the inevitable question, and found to know nothing, Emerson turned away from him, and lost all interest in his conversation. A few days afterward some one was heard to say, "Mr. Emerson, how did you like Professor ——?"

"Let me see," he replied; "is not he the man who was at the same university with Matthew Arnold, and who could tell us nothing of him?"

"How about Matthew Arnold?" he said to B—— on his return from England.

"I did not see him," was the somewhat cool reply.

"Yes! but he is one of the men one wishes not to lose sight of," said Emerson.

"Arnold has written a few good essays," rejoined the other, "but his talk about Homer is all nonsense."

"No, no, no!" said Emerson; "it is good, every word of it!"

When the lecture on Brook Farm really came, it was full of wit and charm, as well as of the truth he so seriously desired to convey. The audience was like a firm, elastic wall, against

which he threw the balls of his wit, while they bounded steadily back into his hand. Almost the first thing he said was quoted from Horatio Greenough, whom he esteemed one of the greatest men of our country. But there is nothing more elusive and difficult to retain than Emerson's wit. It pierces and is gone. Some of the broader touches, such as the clothes-pins dropping out of the pockets of the Brook Farm gentlemen as they danced in the evening, were apparent to all, and irresistible. Nothing could be more amusing than the boyish pettishness with which, in speaking of the rareness of best company, he said, "We often found ourselves left to the society of cats and fools."

I find the following note in a brief diary: "October 20, 1868. Last night Mr. Emerson gave his second lecture. It was full of touches of light which dropped from him, to us, his listeners, and made us burn as with a kind of sudden inspiration of truth. He was beautiful both to hear and see. He spoke of poetry and criticism. . . .

"He discovered two reporters present and spoke to them, saying, 'It is not allowed.' Whereat they both replied: 'They were only at work for their own gratification. Of course I could say nothing more; but afterward the Lord smote one of them and he came and confessed.' When he returned after speaking he brought one of the two bouquets which he

found upon his desk. 'I bring you back your flowers,' he said gently. There was no loud applause last evening; but there were little shivers of delight or approbation running over the audience from time to time, like breezes over a cornfield."

Emerson was always faithful to his appreciation of Channing's poems. When "Monadnock" was written, he made a special visit to Boston to talk it over, and the fine lines of Channing were always ready in his memory, to come to the front when called for. His love and loyalty to Elizabeth Hoar should never be forgotten, in however imperfect a rehearsal of his valued companionships. One morning at breakfast I heard him describing her attributes and personality in the most tender and engaging way to Mrs. Stowe, who had never known her, which I would give much to be able to reproduce.

Emerson's truthfulness was often the cause of mirth even to himself. I remember that he thought he did not care for the work of Bayard Taylor, but he confessed one day with sly ruefulness that he had taken up the last "Atlantic" by chance, and found there some noble hexameters upon "November;" and "I said to myself, 'Ah! who is this? this is as good as Clough.' When to my astonishment, and not a little to my discomfiture, I discovered they were Bayard Taylor's! But how about this

'Faust'? We have had Dante done over and over, and even now done, I see, again by a new hand, and Homer forever being done, and now 'Faust'! I quarrel somewhat with the overmuch labor spent upon these translations, but first of all I quarrel with Goethe. 'Faust' is unpleasant to me. The very flavor of the poem repels me, and makes me wish to turn away." The "Divina Commedia," too, he continued, was a poem too terrible to him to read. He had never been able to finish it. It is probable that poor translations of both "Faust" and Dante read in early youth were at the bottom of these opinions.

Emerson was a true appreciator of Walter Scott. At one of the Saturday Club dinners it was suggested that Walter Scott be made the subject of conversation, and the occasion be considered as his birthday. Emerson spoke with brilliant effect two or three times. He was first called out by his friend Judge Hoar, who said he was chopping wood that morning in his woodshed, when Emerson came in and said so many delightful things about Sir Walter that if he would now repeat to the table only a portion of the excellent sayings heard in the woodshed he would delight them all. Emerson rose, and, referring pleasantly to the brilliancy of the judge's imagination, began by expressing his sense of gratitude to Walter Scott, and concluded a fine analysis of his work by

saying that the root and gist of his genius was to be found, in his opinion, in the Border Minstrelsy. His loyalty to the Saturday Club was quite as sincere as Dr. Holmes's, but the difficulties in the way of his constant attendance were somewhat greater. Emerson kept a friendly lookout over absent members, and greeted with approval any one who arrived at the monthly tryst in spite of hindrances. Seeing Mr. Fields appear one day, bag in hand, at a time when he was living in the country, Emerson glanced at him affectionately, saying half aloud, "Good boy! good boy!" At this meeting it appeared that Lowell and Emerson had chanced to go together, while in Paris, to hear Renan. They spoke of the beauty and perfection of his Hebrew script upon the blackboard; it was faultless, they said. Emerson added that he could not understand Renan's French, so he looked at Lowell, who wore a very wise expression, instead.

Emerson was no lover of the sentimental school. The sharp arrow of his wit found a legitimate target there. Of one person in especial, whom we all knew and valued for extraordinary gifts, he said: "—— is irreclaimable. The sentimentalists are the most dangerous of the insane, for they cannot be shut up in asylums."

The labor bestowed upon his own work before committing himself to print was limitless.

I have referred to this already in speaking of the publication of his address after the death of Thoreau. Sometimes in joke a household committee would be formed to sit in judgment on his essays, and get them out of his hands. The "May-day" poem was long in reaching its home in print. There were references to it from year to year, but he could never be satisfied to yield it up. In April, 1865, after the fall of Richmond, he dined with us, full of what he said was "a great joy to the world, not alone to our little America." That day he brought what he then called some verses on Spring to read aloud ; but when the reading was ended, he said they were far "too fragmentary to satisfy him," and quietly folded them up and carried them away again.

This feeling of unreadiness to print sprang as much from the wonderful modesty as from the sincerity of his character. He wrote shortly after to his publisher : —

"I have the more delight in your marked overestimate of my poem that I have been vexed with a belief that what skill I had in whistling was nearly or quite gone, and that I might henceforth content myself with guttural consonants or dissonants, and not attempt warbling. On the strength of your note, I am working away at my last pages of rhyme. But this has been and is a week of company. Yet I shall do the best I can with the quarters of hours."

Again, with his mind upon the "May-day" poem, he wrote: —

"I have long seen with some terror the necessity closing round me, in spite of all my resistance, that shall hold me from home. It now seems fixed to the 20th or 21st March. I had only consented to 1st March. But in the negotiations of my agent it would still turn out that the primary engagements made a year ago, and to which the others were only appendages — the primaries, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh — must needs thrust themselves into March, and without remedy. But I cannot allow the 'May-day' to come till I come. There were a few indispensable corrections made and sent to the printer, which he reserved to be corrected on the plates, but of which no revise was ever sent to me; and as good publish no book as leave these *errata* unexpunged. Then there is one quatrain, to which his notice was not called, for which I wish to substitute another. So I entreat you not to finish the book except for the fire until I come. As the public did not die for the book on the 1st January, I presume they can sustain its absence on the 1st April. . . . Though I do not know that your courage will really hold out to publish it on the 1st April if I were quite ready."

Again in the same spirit he writes to his editor and publisher: —

You ask in your last note for "Leasts and Mosts" for the "Atlantic." You have made me so popular by your brilliant advertising and arrangements (I will say, not knowing how to qualify your social skill) that I am daily receiving invitations to read lectures far and near, and some of these I accept, and must therefore keep the readable lectures by me for a time, though I doubt not that this mite, like the mountain, will fall into the "Atlantic" at last.

Ever your debtor, R. W. EMERSON.

At another time he wrote: —

"I received the account rendered of the Blue and Gold Edition of the 'Essays' and 'Poems.' I keep the paper before me and study it now and then to see if you have lost money by the transaction, and my prevailing impression is that you have."

It was seldom he showed a sincere willingness or desire to print. One day, however (it was in 1863), he came in bringing a poem he had written concerning his younger brother, who, he said, was a rare man, and whose memory richly deserved some tribute. He did not know if he could finish it, but he would like to print *that*. It was about the same period that he came to town and took a room at the Parker House, bringing with him the unfinished sketch of a few verses which he wished Mr. Fields to hear. He drew a small table into the

centre of the room, which was still in disorder (a former occupant having slept there the previous night), and then read aloud the lines he proposed to give to the press. They were written on separate slips of paper, which were flying loosely about the room and under the bed. A question arose of the title, when Mr. Fields suggested "Voluntaries," which was cordially accepted and finally adopted.

He was ever seeking suggestions, and ready to accept corrections. He wrote to his publisher:

"I thank you for both the corrections, and accept them both, though in reading, one would always say, 'You pet,' so please write, though I grudge it [Thou pet], and [mass], and [minster]. Please also to write [arctic], in the second line with small [a] if, as I think, it is now written large [A]. And I forgot, I believe, to strike out a needless series of quotation commas with which the printing was encumbered."

His painstaking never relaxed, even when he was to read a familiar lecture to an uncritical audience. He had been invited by the members of the Young Ladies' Saturday Morning Club to read one of his essays in their parlor. This he kindly consented to do, as well as to pass the previous night with his friends in Charles Street, and read to them an unpublished paper, which he called "Amita." Some question having arisen as to the possibility of his keeping both the engagements, he wrote as follows: —

"Dear Mrs. F., — I mean surely to obey your first command, namely, for the visit to you on Friday evening next, and I fully trust that I wrote you that I would. . . . And now I will untie the papers of 'Amita,' and see if I dare read them on Friday, or must find somewhat less nervous."

I find the following brief record of the occasion: —

"Mr. Emerson arrived from Concord. He said he took it for granted we should be occupied at that hour, but he would seize the moment to look over his papers. So I begged him to go into the small study and find quiet there as long as he chose. . . . Presently Emerson came down to tea; the curtains were drawn, and a few guests arrived. We sat round the tea table in the library, while he told us of ——'s life in Berlin, where Mr. and Mrs. Hermann Grimm and Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft had opened a pleasant social circle for him. He also talked much of the Grimms. His friendship for Hermann Grimm had extended over many years, and an interesting correspondence has grown up between them. More guests arrived, and the talk became general until the time came to listen to 'Amita.'"

The charm of that reading can never be forgotten by those who heard it. The paper itself can now be found upon the printed page; but Emerson's enjoyment of his own wit, as re-

flected back from the faces of his listeners, cannot be reproduced, nor a kind of squirrel-like shyness and swiftness which pervaded it.

The diary continues: —

"C—— and —— were first at breakfast, but Mr. Emerson soon followed. The latter had been some time at work, and his hands were cold. I had heard him stirring before seven o'clock. He came down bright and fresh, however, with the very spirit of youth in his face. At table they fell upon that unfailing resource in conversation, anecdotes of animals and birds. Speaking of parrots, Mr. Emerson said he had never heard a parrot say any of these wonderful things himself, but the Storer family of Cambridge, who were very truthful people, had told him astonishing anecdotes of a bird belonging to them, which he could not disbelieve because they told him.

"At ten o'clock we went to Miss L——'s, where the young ladies' club was convened to hear Mr. Emerson on 'Manners.' He told us we should do better to stay at home, as we had heard this paper many times. Happily we did not take his advice. There were many good things added, beside the pleasure of hearing the old ones revived. One of the things new to me was the saying of a wise woman, who remarked that she 'did not think so much of what people said as of what made them say it.' It was pretty to see the enthusiasm of the girls,

and to hear what Celia Thaxter called their 'virile applause.'"

During the same season Emerson consented to give a series of readings in Boston. He was not easily persuaded to the undertaking until he felt assured of the very hearty coöperation which the proposed title of "Conversations" made evident to him. The following note will give some idea of his feeling with regard to the plan.

CONCORD, 24th February, 1872.

DEAR ——: You are always offering me kindness and eminent privileges, and for this courageous proposition of "Conversations on Literature with Friends, at Mechanics' Hall," I pause and poise between pleasure and fear. The name and the undertaking are most attractive; but whether it can be adequately attempted by me, who have a couple of tasks which Osgood and Company know of, now on my slow hands, I hesitate to affirm. Well, the very proposal will perhaps arm my head and hands to drive these tasks to a completion. And you shall give me a few days' grace, and I will endeavor to send you a considerate answer.

Later, in March, he wrote: —

"For the proposed 'Conversations,' which is a very good name, I believe I must accept your proposition frankly, though the second week of April looks almost too near."

As the appointed time approached, a fresh subject for nervousness suggested itself, which the following note will explain : —

CONCORD, 12th April, 1872.

MY DEAR ——: I entreat you to find the correspondent of the New York "Tribune," who reports Miss Vaughan's and Henry James's lectures in Boston, and adjure her or him, as he or she values honesty and honor, not to report any word of what Mr. Emerson may say or do at his coming "Conversations." Tell the dangerous person that Mr. E. accepted this task, proffered to him by private friends, on the assurance that the audience would be composed of his usual circle of private friends, and that he should be protected from any report ; that a report is so distasteful to him that it would seriously embarrass and perhaps cripple or silence much that he proposes to communicate ; and if the individual has bought tickets, these shall gladly be refunded, and with thanks and great honor of your friend,

R. W. EMERSON.

In spite of all these terrors, the "Conversations" were an entire success, financially as well as otherwise.

I find in the diary : —

"This afternoon Mr. Emerson gave his first 'Conversation' in this course, which —— has

arranged for him. He will make over fourteen hundred dollars by these readings. There was much new and excellent matter in the discourse to-day, and it was sown, as usual, with felicitous quotations. His introduction was gracefully done. He said he regarded the company around him as a society of friends whom it was a great pleasure to him to meet. He spoke of the value of literature, but also of the superior value of thought if it can be evolved in other ways, quoting that old saying of Catherine de Medicis, who remarked, when she was told of some one who could speak twenty languages: 'That means he has twenty words for one idea. I would rather have twenty ideas to one word.'"

And again: —

"*April* 22. — To-day is the second of Mr. Emerson's 'Readings,' or 'Conversations,' and he is coming with Longfellow and the Hunts to have dinner afterward. . . . We had a gay, lovely time at the dinner; but, first about the lecture. Emerson talked of poetry, and the unity which exists between science and poetry, the latter being the fine insight which solves all problems. The *un*written poetry of to-day, the virgin soil, was strongly, inspiringly revealed to us. He was not talking, he said, when he spoke of poetry, of the smooth verses of magazines, but of poetry itself wherever it was found. He read favorite single lines from Byron's 'Island,' giving Byron great praise, as

if in view of the injustice which has been done him in our time. After Byron's poem he read a lyric written by a traveler to the Tonga Islands, which is in Martin's 'Travels;' also a noble poem called 'The Soul,' and a sonnet, by Wordsworth. We were all entranced as the magic of his sympathetic voice passed from one poetic vision to another. Indeed, we could not bear to see the hour fade away."

I find the following fragment of a note written during May of that year: —

I received on my return home last night, with pleasure which is quite ceasing to surprise, the final installment of one hundred and seven dollars from the singular soliloquies called "Conversations," inaugurated by the best of directors.

Evermore thanks. R. W. Emerson.

Again, in the journal I find: —

"Another lecture from Emerson — 'Poetry, Religion, Love' — 'superna respicit amor.' His whole discourse was a storehouse of delights and inspirations. There was a fine contribution from Goethe; a passage where he bravely recounts his indebtedness to the great of all ages. Varnhagen von Ense, Jacob Böhmen, Swedenborg, and the poets brought their share.

"There was an interlude upon domestic life, 'where alone the true man could be revealed,' which was full of beauty.

"He came in to-day to see ——. He flouts the idea of 'that preacher, Horace Greeley,' being put up as candidate for president. 'If it had been Charles Francis Adams, now, we should all have voted for him. To be sure, it would be his father and his grandfather for whom we were voting, but we should all believe in him.'

"We think this present course of lectures more satisfactory than the last. One thing is certain, he flings his whole spirit into them. He reads the poems he loves best in literature, and infuses into their rendering the pure essence of his own poetic life. We can never forget his reading of 'The Wind,' a Welsh poem by Taliesin — the very rush of the elements was in it."

Emerson was perfectly natural and at ease in manner and speech during these readings. He would sometimes bend his brows and shut his eyes, endeavoring to recall a favorite passage, as if he were at his own library table. One day, after searching thus in vain for a passage from Ben Jonson, he said: "It is all the more provoking as I do not doubt many a friend here might help me out with it."

When away from home on his lecture tours, Emerson did not fail to have his share of disasters. He wrote from Albany, in 1865, to Mr. Fields: —

An unlucky accident drives me here to make a draft on you for fifty dollars, which I hope will not annoy you. The truth is that I lost my wallet — I fear to some pickpocket — in Fairhaven, Vermont, night before last (some $70 or $80 in it), and had to borrow money of a Samaritan lady to come here. I pray you do not whisper it to the swallows for fear it should go to ——, and he should print it in "Fraser." I am going instantly to the best book-shop to find some correspondent of yours to make me good. I was to have read a lecture here last night, but the train *walked* all the way through the ice, sixty miles, from six in the morning, and arrived here at *ten* at night. I hope still that Albany will entreat me on its knees to read to-night. One other piece of bad news if you have not already learned it. Can you not burn down the Boston Athenæum to-night? for I learned by chance that they have a duplicate of the "Liber Amoris." I hope for great prosperity on my journey as the necessary recoil of such adversities, and specially to pay my debts in twenty days. Yours, with constant regard,

R. W. Emerson.

The apprehensions which assailed him before his public addresses or readings were not of a kind to affect either speech or behavior. He seemed to be simply detained by his own dissatisfaction with his work, and was forever

looking for something better to come, even when it was too late. His manuscripts were often disordered, and at the last moment, after he began to read, appeared to take the form in his mind of a forgotten labyrinth through which he must wait to find his way in some more opportune season.

In the summer of 1867 he delivered the address before the Phi Beta at Harvard. He seemed to have an especial feeling of unreadiness on that day, and, to increase the trouble, his papers slipped away in confusion from under his hand as he tried to rest them on a poorly arranged desk or table. Mr. Hale put a cushion beneath them finally, after Emerson began to read, which prevented them from falling again, but the whole matter was evidently out of joint in the reader's eyes. He could not be content with it, and closed without warming to the occasion. It was otherwise, however, to those who listened; they did not miss the old power: but after the reading he openly expressed his own discontent, and walked away dissatisfied. Miss Emerson writes to me of this occasion: "You recall the sad Phi Beta day of 1867. The trouble that day was that for the first time his eyes refused to serve him; he could not see, and therefore could hardly get along. His work had been on the whole satisfactory to him, and if he could have read it straight all would have been happy instead of miserable."

On another and more private occasion, also, he came away much disappointed himself, because, the light being poor and his manuscript disarranged, he had not been just, he thought, even to such matter as lay before him. And who can forget the occasion of the delivery of the Boston Hymn? — that glad New Year when the people were assembled in our large Music Hall to hear read the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln. When it was known that Emerson was to follow with a poem, a stillness fell on the vast assembly as if one ear were waiting to catch his voice; but the awful moment, which was never too great for his will and endeavor, was confusing to his fingers, and the precious leaves of his manuscript fell as he rose, and scattered themselves among the audience. They were quickly gathered and restored, but for one instant it seemed as if the cup so greatly desired was to be dashed from the lips of the listeners.

His perfect grace in conversation can hardly be reproduced, even if one could gather the arrows of his wit. But I find one or two slight hints of the latter which are too characteristic to be omitted. Speaking of some friends who were contemplating a visit to Europe just after our civil war, when exchange was still very high, he said that "the wily American would elude Europe for a year yet, hoping exchange would go down." On being introduced to an invited

guest of the Saturday Club, Emerson said: "I am glad to meet you, sir. I often see your name in the papers and elsewhere, and am happy to take you by the hand for the first time."

"Not for the first time," was the reply. "Thirty-three years ago I was enjoying my school vacation in the woods, as boys will. One afternoon I was walking alone, when you saw me and joined me, and talked of the voices of nature in a way which stirred my boyish pulses, and left me thinking of your words far into the night."

Emerson looked pleased, but rejoined that it must have been long ago indeed when he ventured to talk of such fine subjects.

In conversing with Richard H. Dana ("Two Years Before the Mast") the latter spoke of the cold eyes of one of our public men. "Yes," said Emerson meditatively, "holes in his head! holes in his head!"

In speaking once of education and of the slight attention given to the development of personal influence, he said "he had not yet heard of Rarey" (the famous horse-tamer of that time) "having been made Doctor of Laws."

After an agreeable conversation with a gentleman who had suffered from ill health, Emerson remarked, "You formerly bragged of bad health, sir; I trust you are all right now."

Emerson's reticence with regard to Carlyle's

strong expressions against America was equally wise and admirable. His friends crowded about him, urging him to denounce Carlyle, as a sacred duty, but he stood serene and silent as the rocks until the angry sea was calm.

Of his grace of manner, what could be more expressive than the following notes of compliment and acknowledgment?

"When I came home from my pleasant visit to your house last week (or was it a day or two before last week?), Mrs. Hawthorne, arriving in Concord a little later than I, brought me the photograph of Raffaelle's original sketch of Dante, and from you. It appears to be a fixed idea in your mind to benefit and delight me, and still in ingenious and surprising ways. Well, I am glad that my lot is cast in the time and proximity of excellent persons, even if I do not often see their faces. I send my thanks for this interesting picture, which so strangely brings us close to the painter again, and almost hints that a supermarine and superaerial telegraph may bring us thoughts from him yet."

And, again, with reference to a small photograph from a very interesting *rilievo* done by a young Roman who died early, leaving nothing in more permanent form to attest his genius: —

"'The Star-led Wizards' arrived safely at my door last night, as the beauty and splendid fancy of their figures, and not less the generous

instructions of their last entertainer and guide, might well warrant and secure.

"It was surely a very unlooked-for but to me most friendly inspiration of yours which gave their feet this direction. But they are and shall be gratefully and reverently received and enshrined, and in the good hope that you will so feel engaged at some time or times to stop and make personal inquiry after the welfare of your guests and wards."

And again: —

How do you suppose that unskillful scholars are to live, if Fields should one day die? *Serus in cœlum redeat!*

Affectionately yours and his,

R. W. Emerson.

Surely the grace and friendly charm of these conversational notes warrant their preservation even to those who are not held by the personal attraction which lay behind them.

Again he writes: —

"I have been absent from home since the noble Saturday evening, or should have sent you this book of Mr. Stirling's, which you expressed a wish to see. The papers on Macaulay, Tennyson, and Coleridge interest me, and the critic is master of his weapons.

"Meantime, in these days, my thoughts are all benedictions on the dwellers in the happy home of number 148 Charles Street."

His appreciation of the hospitality of others was only a reflection from his own. I find a few words in the journal as follows: "Mr. Emerson was like a benediction in the house, as usual. He was up early in the morning looking over books and pictures in the library."

I find also the mention of one evening when he brought his own journal to town and read us passages describing a visit in Edinburgh, where he was the guest of Mrs. Crowe. She was one of those ladies of Edinburgh, he said, "who could turn to me, as she did, and say, 'Whom would you like to meet?' Of course I said, Lord Jeffrey, De Quincey, Samuel Brown, called the alchemist by chemists, and a few others. She was able, with her large hospitality, to give me what I most desired. She drove with Samuel Brown and myself to call on De Quincey, who was then living most uncomfortably in lodgings with a landlady who persecuted him continually. While I was staying at Mrs. Crowe's, De Quincey arrived there one evening, after being exposed to various vicissitudes of weather, and latterly to a heavy rain. Unhappily Mrs. Crowe's apparently unlimited hospitality was limited at pantaloons, and poor De Quincey was obliged to dry his water-soaked garments at the fireside."

Emerson read much also that was interesting of Tennyson and of Carlyle. Of the latter he said that the last time he was in England he

drove directly to his house. "Jane Carlyle opened the door for me, and the man himself stood behind and bore the candle. 'Well, here we are, shoveled together again,' was his greeting. Carlyle's talk is like a river, full and never ceasing; we talked until after midnight, and again the next morning at breakfast we went on. Then we started to walk to London; and London bridge, the Tower, and Westminster were all melted down into the river of his speech."

After the reading that evening there was singing, and Emerson listened attentively. Presently he said, when the first song ended, "I should like to know what the words mean." The music evidently signified little to his ears. Before midnight, when we were alone, he again reverted to Tennyson. He loves to gather and rehearse what is known of that wonderful man.

Early in the morning he was once more in the library. I found him there laughing over a little book he had discovered. It was Leigh Hunt's copy of "English Traits," and was full of marginal notes, which amused Emerson greatly.

Not Mrs. Crowe's hospitality nor any other could ever compare in his eyes with that of the New York friend to whom I have already alluded. We all agreed that her genius was pre-eminent. Here are two brief notes of graceful acknowledgment to his Boston friends which,

however, may hardly be omitted. In one of these he says : —

"My wife is very sensible of your brave hospitality, offered in your note a fortnight since, and resists all my attempts to defend your hearth from such a crowd. Of course I am too glad to be persuaded to come to you, and so it is our desire to spend the Sunday of my last lecture at your house."

In the other he says : —

"I ought to have acknowledged and thanked you for the plus-Arabian hospitality which warms your note. It might tempt any one but a galley-slave, or a scholar who is tied to his book-crib as the other to his oar, to quit instantly all his dull surroundings, and fly to this lighted, genial asylum with doors wide open and nailed back."

There is a brief glimpse of Emerson upon his return from California which it is a pleasure to recall. He came at once, even before going to Concord, to see Mr. Fields. "We must not visit San Francisco too young," he said, "or we shall never wish to come away. It is called the 'Golden Gate,' not because of its gold, but because of the lovely golden flowers which at this season cover the whole face of the country down to the edge of the great sea." He smiled at the namby-pamby travelers who turned back because of the discomforts of the trip into the valley of the Yosemite. It was a place full of

marvel and glory to him. The only regret attending the trip seems to have been that he was obliged to miss the meetings of the Saturday Club, which were always dear to him.

The following extract gives a picture of him about this time : —

"A call from Mr. Emerson, who talked of Lowell's 'joyous genius.' He said : 'I have read what he has done of late with great interest, and am sorry to have been so slow as not to have written him yet, especially as I am to meet him at the club dinner to-day. How is Pope?' he continued, crossing the room to look at an authentic portrait by Richardson of that great master of verse. 'Such a face as this should send us all to re-reading his works again.' Then turning to the bust of Tennyson, by Woolner, which stood near, he said, 'The more I think of this bust and the grand self-assertion in it, the more I like it.' . . . Emerson came in after the club dinner ; Longfellow also. Mrs. G—— was present, and bragged grandly, and was very smart in talk. Afterward Emerson said he was reminded of Carlyle's expression with regard to Lady Duff Gordon, whom he considered a female St. Peter walking fearlessly over the waves of the sea of humbug."

Opportunities for social communication were sacred in his eyes, and never to be lightly thrown aside. He wore an expectant look upon his face in company, as if waiting for some new

word from the last comer. He was himself the stimulus, even when disguised as a listener, and his additions to the evenings called Mr. Alcott's Conversations were marked and eagerly expected. Upon the occasion of Longfellow's last departure for Europe in 1869, a private farewell dinner took place, where Emerson, Agassiz, Holmes, Lowell, Greene, Norton, Whipple, and Dana all assembled in token of their regard. Emerson tried to persuade Longfellow to go to Greece to look after the Klephs, the supposed authors of Romaic poetry, so beautiful in both their poetic eyes. Finding this idea unsuccessful, he next turned to the Nile, to those vast statues which still stand awful and speechless witnesses of the past. He was interesting and eloquent, but Longfellow was not to be persuaded. It was an excellent picture of the two contrasting characters, — Longfellow, serene, considerate, with his plans arranged and his thought resting in his home and his children's requirements ; Emerson, with eager, unresting thought, excited by the very idea of travel to plunge farther into the strange world where the thought of mankind was born.

This lover of hospitalities was also king in his own domain. In the winter of 1872 Mr. Fields was invited to read a lecture in Concord, and an early invitation came bidding us to pass the time under his roof-tree. A few days before, a note was received, saying that Emerson him-

self was detained in Washington, and could not reach home for the occasion. His absence, however, was to make no difference about our visit. He should return at the earliest possible moment. The weather turned bitterly cold before we left Boston. It was certainly no less bleak when we reached Concord. Even the horse that carried us from the station to the house had on his winter coat. Roaring fires were blazing when we reached the house, which were only less warm than our welcome.

After supper, just as the lecture hour was approaching, I suddenly heard the front door open. In another moment there was the dear sage himself ready with his welcome. He had lectured the previous evening in Washington, and left in the earliest possible train, coming through without pause to Concord. In spite of the snow and cold, he said he should walk to the lecture-room as soon as he had taken a cup of tea, and before the speaker had finished his opening sentence Mr. Emerson's welcome face appeared at the door.

After the lecture the old house presented a cheerful countenance. Again the fire blazed, friends sent flowers, and Mr. Alcott joined in conversation. "Quite swayed out of his habit," said Emerson, "by the good cheer." The spirit of hospitality led the master of the house to be swayed also, for it was midnight before the talk was ended. It was wonderful to see how strong

and cheerful and unwearied he appeared after his long journey. "I would not discourage this young acolyte," he said, turning to the lecturer of the evening and laughing, "by showing any sense of discomfort."

When we arose the next morning the sun was just dawning over the level fields of snow. The air was fresh, the sky cloudless, the glory of the scene indescribable. The weight of weariness I had brought from the city was lifted by the scene before me, and by the influence of the great nature who was befriending us within the four walls. It was good to look upon the same landscape which was the source of his own inspirations.

Emerson was already in the breakfast-room at eight o'clock. There was much talk about the lack of education in English literature among our young people. Emerson said a Boston man who usually appeared sufficiently well informed asked him if he had ever known Spinoza. He talked also of Walt Whitman and Coventry Patmore, and asked the last news of Allingham: when suddenly, as it seemed, the little horse came again, in his winter coat, and carried us to the station, and that day was done.

There is a bit of description of Emerson as he appeared at a political meeting in his earlier years which I love to remember. The meeting was called in opposition to Daniel Webster, and Emerson was to address the people. It was in

Cambridgeport. When he rose to speak he was greeted by hisses, long and full of hate; but a friend said, who saw him there, that he could think of nothing but dogs baying at the moon. He was serene as moonlight itself.

The days came, alas! when desire must fail, and the end draw near. One morning he wrote from Concord: "I am grown so old that, though I can read from a paper, I am no longer fit for conversation, and dare not make visits. So we send you our thanks, and you shall not expect us."

It has been a pleasure to rehearse in my memory these glimpses of Emerson, and, covered with imperfections as they are, I have found courage for welding them together in the thought that many minds must know him through his work who long to ask what he was like in his habit as he lived, and whose joy in their teacher can only be enhanced by such pictures as they can obtain of the righteousness and beauty of his personal behavior.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS AND UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

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Dr. Holmes's social nature, as expressed in conversation and in his books, drew him into communication with a very large number of persons. It cannot be said, however, in this age marked by altruisms, that he was altruistic; on the contrary, he loved himself, and made himself his prime study — but as a member of the human race. He had his own purposes to fulfill, his own self-appointed tasks, and he preferred to take men only on his own terms. He was filled with righteous indignation, in reading Carlyle, to find a passage where, hearing the door-bell ring one morning when he was very busy, he exclaimed that he was afraid it was "the man Emerson!" Yet Dr. Holmes was himself one of the most carefully guarded men, through his years of actual production, who ever lived and wrote. His wife absorbed her life in his, and mounted guard to make sure that interruption was impossible. Nevertheless, he was eminently a lover of men, or he could not have drawn them perpetually to his side.

His writings were never aimed too high; his sole wish was to hit the heart, if possible; but if a shot hit the head also, he showed a childlike pride in the achievement.

When the moment came to meet men face to face, what unrivaled gayety and good cheer possessed him! He was king of the dinner-table during a large part of the century. He loved to talk, but he was excited and quickened by the conversation of others, for reverence was never absent from his nature. How incomparable his gift of conversation was, it will be difficult, probably impossible, for any one to understand who had never known him. It was not that he was wiser, or wittier, or more profound, or more radiant with humor, than some other distinguished men; the shades of Macaulay, Sydney Smith, De Quincey, and Coleridge rise up before us from the past, and among his contemporaries we recall the sallies of Tom Appleton, the charm of Agassiz, of Cornelius Felton, and others of the Saturday Club; but with Dr. Holmes sunshine and gayety came into the room. It was not a determination to be cheerful or witty or profound; but it was a natural expression, like that of a child, sometimes overclouded and sometimes purely gay, but always open to the influences around him, and ready for "a good time." His power of self-excitement seemed inexhaustible. Given a dinner-table, with light and color, and some-

body occasionally to throw the ball, his spirits would rise and coruscate astonishingly. He was not unaware if men whom he considered his superiors were present; he was sure to make them understand that he meant to sit at their feet and listen to them, even if his own excitement ran away with him. "I 've talked too much," he often said, with a feeling of sincere penitence, as he rose from the table. "I wanted to hear what our guest had to say." But the wise guest, seizing the opportunity, usually led Dr. Holmes on until he forgot that he was not listening and replying. It was this sensitiveness, perhaps, which made his greatest charm — a power of sympathy which led him to understand what his companion would say if he should speak, and made it possible for him to talk in a measure for others as well as to express himself.

Nothing, surely, could be more unusual and beautiful than such a gift, nor any more purely his own. His conversation reminded one of those beautiful *danseuses* of the South upon whom every eye is fastened, by whom every sense is fascinated, but who dance up to their companions, and lead them out, and make them feel all the exhilaration of the occasion, while the leader alone possesses all the enchantment and all the inspiration. Of course conversation of this kind is an outgrowth of character. His reverence was one source of its inspiration, and

a desire to do everything well which he undertook. He was a faithful friend and a keen appreciator; he disliked profoundly to hear the depreciation of others. His character was clear-cut and defined, like his small, erect figure; perfect of its kind, and possessed of great innate dignity, veiled only by delightful, incomparable gifts and charms.

Our acquaintance and friendship with him lasted through many years, beginning with my husband's early association. I think their acquaintance began about the time when the doctor threatened to hang out a sign, "The smallest fevers gratefully received," and when the young publisher's literary enthusiasm led him to make some excuse for asking medical advice.

The very first letter I find in Dr. Holmes's handwriting is the following amusing note accompanying the manuscript copy of "Astræa: The Balance of Illusions." The note possibly alludes to "Astræa" as the poem to be written.

$100.00.

My dear Sir, — The above is an argument of great weight to all those who, like the late John Rogers, are surrounded by a numerous family.

I will incubate this golden egg two days, and present you with the resulting chicken upon the third. Yours very truly,

O. W. Holmes.

P. S. You will perceive that the last sentence is figurative, and implies that I shall watch and fast over your proposition for forty-eight hours. But I could n't on any account be so sneaky as to get up and recite poor old "Hanover" over again. Oh, no! If anything, it must be of the "paullo majora."

"Silvæ sint consule dignæ." Let us have a brand-new poem or none.

Yours as on the preceding page.

The next letters which I find as having passed between the two friends are dated in the year 1851, and it must have been about this period that their relations began to grow closer. In every succeeding year they became more and more intimate; and when death interrupted their communication, Dr. Holmes's untiring kindness to me continued to the end. Unfortunately for this record, the friendship was not maintained by correspondence. Common interests brought the two men together almost daily, long before Dr. Holmes bought a house in Charles Street within a few doors of our own, and such contiguity made correspondence to any great extent unnecessary.

The removal from Montgomery Place, where he had lived some years, to Charles Street was a matter of great concern. He says in the "Autocrat" that "he had no idea until he pulled up his domestic establishment what an

enormous quantity of roots he had been making during the years he had been planted there." Before announcing his intention, he came early one morning, with his friend Lothrop Motley, to inspect our house, which was similar to the one he thought of buying. I did not know his intention at the time, but I was delighted with his enthusiasm for the view over Charles River Bay, which in those days was wider and more beautiful than it can ever be again. Nothing would satisfy him but to go to the attic, which he declared, if it were his, he should make his study.

Shortly after, the doctor took possession of his new house, but characteristically made no picturesque study in which to live. He passed many long days and evenings, even in summer, in a lower room opening on the street, which wore the air of a physician's office, and solaced his love for the picturesque by an occasional afternoon at his early home in Cambridge. Of a visit to this latter house I find the following description in my note-book: "Drove out in the afternoon and overtook Professor Holmes" (he liked to be called "Professor" then), "with his wife and son, who were all on their way to his old homestead in Cambridge. They asked us to go there with them, as it was only a few steps from where we were. The professor went to the small side door, and knocked with a fine brass knocker which had just been presented to him from the old Hancock House. It was de-

lightful to see his pleasure in everything about the old house. There hung a portrait of his father, Abiel Holmes, at the age of thirty-one, — a beautiful face it was; there also a picture of the reverend doctor's first wife, fair, and perhaps a trifle coquettish, or what the professor called 'a little romantic;' the old chairs from France were still there; but no modern knickknacks interfered with the old-fashioned, quiet effect of the whole. He has taken for his writing-room the former parlor looking into the garden. He loves to work there, and he and his wife evidently spend a good deal of time at the old place. There is a legend that Washington spent three nights there, and that Dr. Bradshaw stepped from the door to make a prayer upon the departure of the troops from that point. Behind the house are some fine trees where we sat in the shade talking until the shadows grew long upon the grass."

During the very last years of Dr. Holmes's life he used to talk often of the old Cambridge home and the days of his childhood there. "I can remember, when I shut my eyes," he said one day, "just as if it were yesterday, how beautiful it was looking out of the windows of my father's house, how bright and sunshiny the Common was in front, and the figures which came and went of persons familiar to me. One day some one said, 'There go Russell Sturgis and his bride;' and I looked, and saw what ap-

peared to me then two radiant beings! All this came back to me as I read a volume of his reminiscences lately privately printed, not published, by his children."

Dr. Holmes's out-of-door life was not limited, however, to his excursions to Cambridge. Early in the morning, sometimes before sunrise, standing at my bedroom window overlooking the bay, I have seen his tiny skiff moving quickly over the face of the quiet water; or, later, drifting down idly with the tide, as if his hour of exercise was over, and he was now dreamily floating homeward while he drank in the loveliness of the morning. Sometimes the waves were high and rough, and adventures were to be had; then every muscle was given a chance, and he would return to breakfast tired but refreshed. There was little to be learned about a skiff and its management which he did not acquire. He knew how many pounds a boat ought to weigh, and every detail respecting it. In the "Autocrat" he says, — "My present fleet on the Charles River consists of three rowboats: 1. A small flat-bottomed skiff of the shape of a flat-iron, kept mainly to lend to boys. 2. A fancy 'dory' for two pairs of sculls, in which I sometimes go out with my young folks. 3. My own particular water-sulky, a 'skeleton' or 'shell' race-boat, twenty-two feet long, with huge outriggers, which boat I pull with ten-foot sculls, alone, of course, as it holds but one, and

tips him out if he does not mind what he is about." The description is all delightful, and a little later on there is a reference to such a morning as I have already attempted to recall. "I dare not publicly name the rare joys," he says, "the infinite delights, that intoxicate me on some sweet June morning when the river and bay are smooth as a sheet of beryl-green silk, and I run along ripping it up with my knife-edged shell of a boat, the rent closing after me, like those wounds of angels which Milton tells of, but the seam still shining for many a long rood behind me. . . . To take shelter from the sunbeams under one of the thousand-footed bridges, and look down its interminable colonnades, crusted with green and oozy growths, studded with minute barnacles, and belted with rings of dark muscles, while overhead streams and thunders that other river whose every wave is a human soul flowing to eternity as the river below flows to the ocean, — lying there, moored unseen, in loneliness so profound that the columns of Tadmor in the desert could not seem more remote from life, — the cool breeze on one's forehead, — . . . why should I tell of these things!"

Since the Autocrat has himself told the story of this episode so beautifully, no one else need attempt it. He drank in the very wine of life with the air of those summer mornings.

Returning to some of Dr. Holmes's early

letters, written before he moved to Charles Street, I find him addressing his correspondent from Pittsfield, where for seven years he enjoyed a country house in summer. "But," he said one day many years later, "a country house, you will remember, has been justly styled by Balzac '*une plaie ouverte.*' There is no end to the expenses it entails. I was very anxious to have a country retreat, and when my wife had a small legacy of about two thousand dollars a good many years ago, we thought we would put up a perfectly plain shelter with that money on a beautiful piece of ground we owned in Pittsfield. Well, the architect promised to put the house up for that. But it cost just twice as much, to begin with; that was n't much! Then we had to build a barn; then we wanted a horse and carryall and wagon; so one thing led to another, and it was too far away for me to look after it, and at length, after seven years, we sold it. I could n't bear to think of it or to speak of it for a long time. I loved the trees, and while our children were little it was a good place for them; but we had to sell it; and it was better in the end, although I felt lost without it for a great while." Here is a letter from Pittsfield which describes him there upon his arrival one year in spring: —

PITTSFIELD, June 13, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. FIELDS, — I have just received your very interesting note, and the proof which

accompanied it. I don't know when I ever read anything about myself that struck me so piquantly as that story about the old gentleman. It is almost too good to be true, but you are not in the habit of quizzing. The trait is so nature-like and Dickens-like, no American — no living soul but a peppery, crotchety, good-hearted, mellow old John Bull — could have done such a thing. God bless him! Perhaps the verses are not much, and perhaps he is no great judge whether they are or not: but what a pleasant thing it is to win the hearty liking of any honest creature who is neither your relation nor compatriot, and who must fancy what pleases him for itself and nothing else!

I will not say what pleasure I have received from Miss Mitford's kind words. I am going to sit down, and write her a letter with a good deal of myself in it, which I am quite sure she will read with indulgence, if not with gratification. If you see her, or write to her, be sure to let her know that she must make up her mind to such a letter as she will have to sit down to.

I am afraid I have not much of interest for you. It is a fine thing to see one's trees and things growing, but not so much to tell of. I have been a week in the country now, and am writing at this moment amidst such a scintillation of fireflies and chorus of frogs as a cockney would cross the Atlantic to enjoy. During

the past winter I have done nothing but lecture, having delivered between seventy and eighty all round the country from Maine to western New York, and even confronted the critical terrors of the great city that holds half a million and P—— M——. All this spring I have been working on microscopes, so that it is only within a few days I have really got hold of anything to read — to say nothing of writing, except for my lyceum audiences. I had a literary rencontre just before I came away, however, in the shape of a dinner at the Revere House with Griswold and Epes Sargent. What a curious creature Griswold is! He seems to me a kind of naturalist whose subjects are authors, whose memory is a perfect fauna of all flying, running, and creeping things that feed on ink. Epes has done mighty well with his red-edged school-book, which is a very creditable-looking volume, to say the least.

It would be hard to tell how much you are missed among us. I really do not know who would make a greater blank if he were abstracted. As for myself, I have been all lost since you have been away in all that relates to literary matters, to say nothing of the almost daily aid, comfort, and refreshment I imbibed from your luminous presence. Do come among us as soon as you can; and having come, stay among your devoted friends, of whom count

O. W. Holmes.

From this letter also we get a glimpse of the literary world of New England at that time, and an idea of his own occupations.

By degrees, as the intimacy between the two friends and neighbors grew closer, we find the publisher asking his opinion of certain manuscripts. I have no means of knowing who was the author of the poems frankly described in the following note,[1] but one can only wish that writers, especially young writers, could sometimes see themselves in such a glass — not darkly!

8 Montgomery Place, July 24, 1857.

My dear Mr. Fields, — I return the three poems you sent me, having read them with much gratification. Each of them has its peculiar merits and defects, as it seems to me, but all show poetical feeling and artistic skill.

"Sleep On!" is the freshest and most individual in its character. You will see my pencil comment at the end of it. "Inkerman" is comparatively slipshod and careless, though not without lyric fire and vivid force of description.

"Raphael Sanzio" would deserve higher praise if it were not so closely imitative.

In truth, all these poems have a genuine sound; they are full of poetical thought, and breathed out in softly modulated words. The

[1] The name of the writer has just been sent to me. He was George H. Miles, Professor of English Literature at St. Mary's (Catholic) College, Baltimore, Maryland.

music of "Sleep On!" is very sweet, and I have never seen heroic verse in which the rhyme was less obtrusive or the rhythm more diffluent. Still it would not be fair to speak in these terms of praise without pointing out the transparent imitativeness which is common to all these poems.

"Inkerman" is a poetical Macaulay stewed. The whole flow of its verse and resonant passion of its narrative are borrowed from the "Lays of Ancient Rome." There are many crashing lines in it, and the story is rather dashingly told; but it is very inferior in polish, and even correctness, to both the other poems. I have marked some of its errata.

"Raphael," good as it is, is nothing more than Browning browned over. Every turn of expression, and the whole animus, so to speak, is taken from those poetical monologues of his. *Call it* an imitation, and it is excellent.

The best of the three poems, then, is "Sleep On!" I see Keats in it, and one or both of the Brownings; but though the form is borrowed, the passion is genuine — the fire has passed along there, and the verse has followed before the ashes were quite cool.

Talent, certainly; taste very fine for the melodies of language; deep, quiet sentiment. Genius? If beardless, yea; if in sable silvered, — and I think this cannot be a very young hand, —why, then . . . we will suspend our opinion.

Faithfully yours, O. W. Holmes.

I find several amusing personal letters of this period which are characteristic enough to be preserved. Among them is the following:

21 CHARLES STREET, July 6, 8:33 A. M.
Barometer at $30\frac{1}{10}$.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR, — Your most unexpected gift, which is not a mere token of remembrance, but a permanently valuable present, is making me happier every moment I look at it. It is so pleasant to be thought of by our friends when they have so much to draw their thoughts away from us; it is so pleasant, too, to find that they have cared enough about us to study our special tastes, — that you can see why your beautiful gift has a growing charm for me. Only Mrs. Holmes thinks it ought to be in the parlor among the things for show, and I think it ought to be in the study, where I can look at it at least once an hour every day of my life.

I have observed some extraordinary movements of the index of the barometer during the discussions that ensued, which you may be interested enough to see my notes of.

	BAROMETER.
Mrs. H. My dear, we shall of course keep this beautiful barometer in the parlor.	*Fair.*
Dr. H. Why, no, my dear; the study is the place.	*Dry.*

Mrs. H.
I 'm sure it ought to go in the parlor. It 's too handsome for your old den. *Change.*
Dr. H.
I shall keep it in the study. *Very dry.*
Mrs. H.
I don't think that 's fair. *Rain.*
Dr. H.
I 'm sorry. Can't help it. *Very dry.*
Mrs. H.
It 's — too — too — ba-a-ad. *Much rain.*
Dr. H.
(Music omitted.)
'Mid pleas-ures and paaal-a-a-c-es. *Set Fair.*
Mrs. H.
I *will* have it! You horrid — *Stormy.*

You see what a wonderful instrument this is that you have given me. But, my dear Mr. Fields, while I watch its changes it will be a constant memorial of unchanging friendship; and while the dark hand of fate is traversing the whole range of mortal vicissitudes, the golden index of the kind affections shall stand always at SET FAIR. Yours ever,

O. W. HOLMES.

There are many notes also showing how the two friends played into each other's hands. This one is a sample: —

21 Charles Street, July 17, 1864.

My dear Mr. Fields, — *Can* you tell me anything that will get this horrible old woman of the C—— California off from my shoulders? Do you know anything about this pestilent manuscript she raves about? This continent is not big enough for me and her together, and if she does n't jump into the Pacific I shall have to leap into the Atlantic — I mean the original damp spot so called. Yours always,

O. W. Holmes.

P. S. To avoid the necessity of the latter, I have written to her, cordially recommending suicide as adapted to her case.

Surely there must have been something peculiarly exasperating about this applicant for literary honors, because Dr. Holmes erred, if at all, in the opposite direction. He was far more apt to write and to behave as the following note recommends: "Will you read this young lady's story, and let me know what you propose to do with it? A young woman of tender feelings, I think, and to be treated very kindly." Again: "Will it be too late for a few paragraphs about Forceythe Willson? If not, in what paper? And can you tell me anything? Will you do it yourself?"

The number of these notes is legion, bringing every variety of form and subject and prob-

lem to his friend as editor or publisher, or for private advice. In one of them he says, "Please give me your grandpaternal council." But I have quoted enough upon this head to give an idea of the kind and busy brain not too deeply immersed in its own projects to have a tender regard for those of others.

Meanwhile his own work was continually progressing. Lowell had already made him feel that he was the mainspring of the "Atlantic," which at the time of the war attained the height of its popularity, and achieved a position where it found no peer. The care which Dr. Holmes bestowed upon the finish of his work, the endless labor over its details, are almost inconceivable when we remember that "this power of taking pains," which Carlyle calls one of the attributes of genius, was combined with a gay, mercurial temperament ready to take fire at every chance spark.

One Sunday afternoon in the sad spring of 1864, during the terrible days of the war, he came in to correct a poem. "I am ashamed," he said, "to be troubled by so slight a thing when battles are raging about us; but I have written: —

Where Genoa's deckless caravels were blown.

Now Columbus sailed from Palos, and I must change the verse before it is too late."

This habit of always doing his best is surely

one of the fine lessons of his life. It has given his prose a perfection which will carry it far down the shores of time. The letter sent during the last summer of his life to be read at the celebration of Bryant's birthday was a model of simplicity in the expression of feeling. It was brief, and at another time would have been written and revised in half a day; but in his enfeebled condition it was with the utmost difficulty that he could satisfy himself. He worked at it patiently day after day, until his labor became a pain; nevertheless, he continued, and won what he deserved — the applause of men practiced in his art who were there to listen and appreciate.

Any record of Dr. Holmes's life would be imperfect which contained no mention of the pride and pleasure he felt in the Saturday Club. Throughout the forty years of its prime he was not only the most brilliant talker of that distinguished company, but he was also the most faithful attendant. He was seldom absent from the monthly dinners either in summer or in winter, and he lived to find himself at the head of the table where Agassiz, Longfellow, Emerson, and Lowell had in turn preceded him. Could a shorthand writer have been secretly present at those dinners, what a delightful book of wise talk and witty sayings would now lie open before us! Fragments of the good things were sometimes brought away, as loving parents

bring sugar-plums from a feast to the children at home; but they are only fragments, and bear out but inefficiently the reputation which has run before them. The following pathetic incident, related on one of those occasions by Dr. Holmes, need not, however, be omitted: —

"Just forty years ago," he said one day, "I was whipped at school for a slight offense — whipped with a ferule right across my hands, so that I went home with a blue mark where the blood had settled, and for a fortnight my hands were stiff and swollen from the blows. The other day an old man called at my house and inquired for me. He was bent, and could just creep along. When he came in he said: 'How do you do, sir; do you recollect your old teacher Mr. ——?' I did, perfectly! He sat and talked awhile about indifferent subjects, but I saw something rising in his throat, and I knew it was that whipping. After a while he said, 'I came to ask your forgiveness for whipping you once when I was in anger; perhaps you have forgotten it, but I have not.' It had weighed upon his mind all these years! He must be rid of it before lying down to sleep peacefully."

Speaking of dining at Taft's, an excellent eating-house at Point Shirley for fish and game, Dr. Holmes said: "The host himself is worth seeing. He is the one good *un*cooked thing at his table."

He had been to Philadelphia with one of his lectures, but he did not have a free chance at any conversation afterward. "I did go to Philadelphia," he said, "with *one* remark, but I brought it back unspoken. It struck in."

Soon after Dr. Holmes's removal to Charles Street began a long series of early morning breakfasts at his publisher's house — feasts of the simplest kind. Many strangers came to Boston in those days, on literary or historical errands — men of tastes which brought them sooner or later to the "Old Corner" where the "Atlantic Monthly" was already a power. Of course one of the first pleasures sought for was an interview with Dr. Holmes, the fame of whose wit ripened early — even before the days of the "Autocrat." It came about quite naturally, therefore, that they should gladly respond to any call which gave them the opportunity to listen to his conversation; and the eight-o'clock breakfast hour was chosen as being the only time the busy guests and host could readily call their own. Occasionally these breakfasts would take place as frequently as two or three times a week. The light of memory has a wondrous gift of heightening most of the pleasures of this life, but the conversation of those early hours was far more stimulating and inspiring than any memory of it can ever be. There were few men, except Poe, famous in American or English literature of that era who did not ap-

pear once at least. The unexpectedness of the company was a great charm; for a brief period Boston enjoyed a sense of cosmopolitanism, and found it possible, as it is really possible only in London, to bring together busy guests with full and eager brains who are not too familiar with one another's thought to make conversation an excitement and a source of development.

Of Dr. Holmes's talk on these occasions it is impossible to give any satisfactory record. The simple conditions of his surroundings gave him a sense of perfect ease, and he spoke with the freedom which marked his nature. It was one of the charms by which he drew men to himself that he not only wore a holiday air of finding life full and interesting, but that he believed in freedom of speech for himself, and therefore wished to find it in others. This emancipation in expression did not extend altogether into the practical working of his life. Conventionalities had a strong hold upon him. He loved to avoid the great world when it was inconvenient, and to get a certain freedom outside of it; but once in the current, the manners of the Romans were his own. He reminded one sometimes of Hawthorne's saying that "in these days men are born in their clothes," although Dr. Holmes's conventions were more easily shuffled off than a casual observer would believe. Nothing could be farther from the ordinary idea of the romantic "man of genius"

than was his well-trimmed little figure, and nothing more surprising and delightful than the way in which his childlikeness of nature would break out and assert itself. He declared one morning that he had discovered the happiest animal in creation — "next to a poet, of course, if we may call him an animal; it is the acheron, the parasite of the honey-bee. And why? Because he attaches himself to the wing of the bee, is carried without exertion to the sweetest flowers, where the bee gathers the honey while the acheron eats it; and all the while the music of the bee attends him as he is borne through the air."

He met Hawthorne for the first time, I think, in this informal way. Holmes had been speaking of Renan, whose books interested him.

"A long while ago," he began, "I said Rome or Reason; now I am half inclined to put it, Rome or Renan." Then suddenly turning to Hawthorne, he said, "By the way, I would write a new novel if you were not in the field, Mr. Hawthorne." "I am not," said Hawthorne; "and I wish you would do it." There was a moment's silence. Holmes said quickly, "I wish you would come to the club oftener." "I should like to," said Hawthorne, "but I can't drink." "Neither can I." "Well, but I can't eat." "Nevertheless, we should like to see you." "But I can't talk, either." After which there was a shout of laughter. Then

said Holmes, "You can listen, though; and I wish you would come."

On another occasion, when Lowell was present, he was talking of changes in physical conditions. Dr. Holmes said, now, at the age of fifty-four, he could eat almost anything set before him, which he could by no means do formerly. Lowell found opportunity somehow at this point to laugh at Holmes for having lately said in print that "Beecher was a man whose thinking marrow was not corrugated by drink or embrowned by meerschaum." Lowell said *he* had no "thinking marrow," and objected to such anatomical terms applied to the best part of a man.

By and by Lowell came out of his critical mood, and said pleasantly, after some talk upon lyric poetry in general, "I like your lyrics, you know, Holmes." "Well," said Holmes, pleased, but speaking earnestly and with a childlike honesty, "but there is something too hopping about them. To tell the truth, nothing has injured my reputation so much as the too great praise which has been bestowed upon my 'windfalls.' After all, the value of a poet to the world is not so much his reputation as a writer of this or that poem, as the fact that the poet is known to be one who is rapt out of himself at times, and carried away into the region of the divine; it is known that the spirit has descended upon him, and taught him what he should speak."

Holmes's admiration of Dickens's genius was very sincere. "He is the greatest of all of them," he loved to say. "Such fertility, such Shakespearean breadth, — there is enough of him; you feel as you do when you see the ocean."

Speaking of the difficulty of being a good listener, he said that it was a terrible responsibility for him to listen to a story. He could never be rid of the feeling that he must remember accurately, or all would be lost. There was one story in particular, told by a friend remarkable as a raconteur, which tried him more than anything he knew in the world, — of the kind. He felt like one of the old Greek chorus with strophe and antistrophe, and it was a weight upon his mind lest he should not laugh properly at the end.

I recall one day, when the subject of Walt Whitman's poetry was introduced, Dr. Holmes said he abhorred playing the critic, partly because he was not a good reader, — had read too cursorily and carelessly; but he thought the right thing had not been said about Walt Whitman. "His books sell largely, and there is a large audience of friends in Washington who praise and listen. Emerson believes in him; Lowell not at all; Longfellow finds some good in his 'yaup;' but the truth is, he is in an amorphous condition."

Longfellow was once speaking of an address

he had heard which he considered quite a perfect performance. "Yes — yes," said Dr. Holmes; "I don't doubt it was very good; but the speaker is such an unpleasant person! He is just one of those fungi that always grow upon universities."

The following extract is from a brief diary:

"Charles Sumner, Longfellow, Greene, Dr. Holmes, came to dine. The latter sparkled and coruscated as I have seldom heard him before. We are more than ever convinced that no one since Sydney Smith was ever so brilliant, so witty, spontaneous, naïf, and unfailing as he."

In speaking of his own class in college he said: "There never was such vigor in any class before, it seems to me. Almost every member turns out sooner or later distinguished for something. We have had every grade of moral status from a criminal to a chief justice, and we never let any one of them drop. We keep hold of their hands year after year, and lift up the weak and failing ones till they are at last redeemed. Ah, there was one exception! Years ago we voted to cast a man out who had been a defaulter or who had committed some offense of that nature. The poor fellow sank down, and before the next year, when we repented of this decision, he had gone too far down and presently died. But we have kept all the rest!

"Every fourth man in our class is a poet. Sam. Smith belongs to our class, who wrote

'My Country 't is of Thee.' Sam. Smith will live when Longfellow, Whittier, and all the rest of us have gone into oblivion. . . .

"Queer man, ——. Looked ten years older than he was, like Caliban. Calibans look always ten years older than they are. A perfect potato of a man. If five hundred pieces of a man had been flung together from different points and stuck, they could not have been more awkwardly concocted than he was.

"James Freeman Clarke was in our class. Ever read his history of the 'Ten Great Religions?' Very good book. Nobody knows how much Clarke is until he reads that book. How he surprises us from time to time. Came out well about 'bolting,' with regard to Butler the other day. Writes good verses, too, — not as good as mine, but good verses." . . . Holmes was abstemious and never ceased talking. "Most men write too much. I would rather risk my future fame upon one lyric than upon ten volumes. But I have said 'Boston is the hub of the Universe;' I will rest upon that."

He spoke also with great feeling of the women who came to him for literary advice and assistance. ——, he says, is his daughter in letters. He has only seen her once, but he has been a faithful correspondent and assistant to her.

Sumner said some one had called —— "an

impediment in the path of science." What did he mean? "It means just this," said Holmes: "—— is no longer young, and I was reading the other day in a book on the Sandwich Islands of an old Fejee man who had been carried away among strangers, but who prayed that he might be carried home and his brains beaten out in peace by his son, according to the custom of those lands. It flashed over me then that our sons beat out our brains in the same way. They do not walk in our ruts of thought or begin exactly where we leave off, but they have a new standpoint of their own."

The talk went on for about four hours, when the company broke up.

One evening the doctor came in after the Phi Beta Kappa dinner at Cambridge. "I can't stop," he said. "I only came to read you my verses which I gave at the dinner to-day: they made such a queer impression! I did n't mean to go, but James Lowell was to preside, and sent me word that I really must be there, so I just wrote these off, and here they are. I don't know that I should have brought them in to read to you, but Hoar declares they are the best I have ever done." After some delay, and in the fading light of sunset reflected from the river, he read the well-known verses "Bill and Joe." He must have been still warm with the excitement of the first reading, for I can never forget the tenderness with which he re-

cited the lines. They are still pleasant on the printed page, but to those who heard him they are divested of the passion of affection with which they were written and read.

Late in life he said to a friend who was speaking of the warm friendships embalmed in his poetry, and which would help to make it endure : "I don't know how that may be ; but the writing of these poems has been a passionate joy."

The following amusing note gives a picture of Dr. Holmes in his most natural and social mood : —

296 Beacon Street, February 11, 1872.

My dear Mr. Fields, — On Friday evening last I white-cravated myself, took a carriage, and found myself at your door at 8 of the clock P. M.

A cautious female responded to my ring, and opened the chained portal about as far as a clam opens his shell to see what is going on in Cambridge Street, where he is waiting for a customer.

Her first glance impressed her with the conviction that I was a burglar. The mild address with which I accosted her removed that impression, and I rose in the moral scale to the comparatively elevated position of what the unfeeling world calls a "sneak-thief."

By dint, however, of soft words, and that look

of ingenuous simplicity by which I am so well known to you and all my friends, I coaxed her into the belief that I was nothing worse than a rejected contributor, an autograph collector, an author with a volume of poems to dispose of, or other disagreeable but not dangerous character.

She unfastened the chain, and I stood before her.

> "I calmed her fears, and she was calm
> And told"

me how you and Mrs. F. had gone to New York, and how she knew nothing of any literary debauch that was to come off under your roof, but would go and call another unprotected female who knew the past, present, and future, and could tell me why this was thus, that I had been lured from my fireside by the ignis fatuus of a deceptive invitation.

It was my turn to be afraid, alone in the house with two of the stronger sex; and I retired.

On reaching home, I read my note and found it was Friday the 16th, not the 9th, I was invited for. . . .

Dear Mr. Fields, I shall be very happy to come to your home on Friday evening, the 16th February, at 8 o'clock, to meet yourself and Mrs. Fields and hear Mr. James read his paper on Emerson. Always truly yours,

O. W. Holmes.

On occasions of social dignity few men have

ever surpassed Dr. Holmes in grace of compliment and perfection of easy ceremony. It was an acquired gift; perhaps it always must be. But as soon as human nature was given a chance to show itself, he was always eager, bringing an unsated store of intellectual curiosity to bear upon every new person or condition. He was generous to a fault in showing his own hand, moving with "infinite jest" over the current of his experiences until he could tempt his interlocutor out upon the same dangerous waters. If others were slow to embark, he nevertheless interested them in the history of his own voyage of life.

Dr. Holmes had never known any very difficult hand to hand struggle with life, but he was quite satisfied with its lesser difficulties. He could laugh at his own want of courage, as he called a certain lack of love for adventure, and he could admire the daring of others. He was happy in the circle of his home affections, and never cared to stray far away. He had a golden sense of comfort in his home life, an entire satisfaction, which made his rare absences a penance. Added to this was his tendency to asthma, from which he suffered often very severely. In a letter written in 1867 from Montreal, whither he had gone to obtain a copyright of one of his books, we can see how his domestic habits, as well as his asthma, made any long absence intolerable to him.

MONTREAL, October 23, 1867.

DEAR MR. FIELDS: . . . I am as comfortable here as I can be, but I have earned my money, for I have had a full share of my old trouble.

Last night was better, and to-day I am going about the town. Miss Frothingham sent me a basket of black Hamburg grapes to-day, which were very grateful after the hotel tea and coffee and other 'pothecary's stuff.

Don't talk to me about taverns! There is just one genuine, clean, decent, palatable thing occasionally to be had in them, — namely, a boiled egg. The soups *taste* pretty good sometimes, but their sources are involved in a darker mystery than that of the Nile. Omelettes taste as if they had been carried in the waiter's hat, or fried in an old boot. I ordered scrambled eggs one day. It must be that they had been scrambled for by *somebody*, but who — who in the possession of a sound reason *could* have scrambled for what I had set before me under that name? Butter! I am thinking just now of those exquisite little pellets I have so often seen at your table, and wondering why the taverns *always* keep it until it is old. Fool that I am! As if the taverns did not know that if it was good it would be eaten, which is not what they want. Then the waiters, with their napkins, — what don't they do with those napkins! Mention any one thing of which you

think you can say with truth, "*That* they do not do." . . .

I have a really fine parlor, but every time I enter it I perceive that

"Still, sad 'odor' of humanity"

which clings to it from my predecessor. Mr. Hogan got home yesterday, I believe. I saw him for the first time to-day. He was civil — they all are civil. I have no fault to find except with taverns here and pretty much everywhere.

Every six months a tavern should burn to the ground, with all its traps, its "properties," its beds and pots and kettles, and start afresh from its ashes like John Phœnix-Squibob.

No; give me home, or a home like mine, where all is clean and sweet, where coffee has preëxisted in the berry, and tea has still faint recollections of the pigtails that dangled about the plant from which it was picked, where butter has not the prevailing character which Pope assigned to Denham, where soup could look you in the face if it had "eyes" (which it has not), and where the comely Anne or the gracious Margaret takes the place of these napkin-bearing animals.

Enough! But I have been forlorn and ailing and fastidious — but I am feeling a little better, and can talk about it. I had some ugly nights, I tell you; but I am writing in good spirits, as

you see. I have written once before to Low, as I think I told you, and on the 25th mean to go to a notary with Mr. Dawson, as he tells me it is the right thing to do.

Yours always, O. W. H.

P. S. Made a pretty good dinner, after all; but better a hash at home than a roast with strangers.

With much the same experience of asthma as a result, he visited Princeton three or four years later, and wrote after his return: —

296 Beacon Street, August 24, 1871.

My dear Fields: . . . I only sat up one whole night, it is true, which was a great improvement on Montreal; but I do not feel right yet, and it is quite uncertain whether I shall be in a condition to enjoy the club by Saturday. So if I come, all the better for me; and if I don't come, you can say that you have in your realm at Parker's not "five hundred as good as he," but a score or so that will serve your turn.

I cut the first leaves I wanted to meddle with in the last "Atlantic" for No. IX. of the "Whispering Gallery," and took it all down like an oyster in the height of the season. It is captivating, like all the rest. Why don't you make a book as big as Allibone's out of your store of unparalleled personal recollections? It

seems too bad to keep them for posterity. When I think of your bequeathing them for the sole benefit of people that are unborn, I want to cry out with Horace: —

"Eheu — *Postume, Postume!*"

Always yours, O. W. Holmes.

Again, three years later, he writes: "I hope you are reasonably careful of yourself during this cold weather. Look out! A hot lecture-room, a cold ride, the best-chamber sheets like slices of cucumber, and one gives one's friends the trouble of writing an obituary, when he might just as well have lived and written theirs. We had a grand club last Saturday. Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, Adams, Tom Appleton (just home a few weeks ago), and Norton (who has been sick a good while) were there, and lots of others, and Lord Houghton as a guest. You ought to have been there; it was the best club for a long time."

The following note, written in 1873, shows how closely Dr. Holmes kept the growth of the club in mind, and his eagerness to bring into it the distinguished intellectual life of Boston.

296 Beacon Street, February 21, 1873.

My dear Mr. Fields, — I doubt whether I shall feel well enough to go to the club to-morrow, as I am somewhat feverish and sore-throaty to-day, though I must crawl out to my lecture.

Mr. Parkman and Professor Wolcott Gibbs are to be voted for, you know.

President Eliot, who nominated Professor Gibbs, will, I suppose, urge his claims if he thinks it necessary, or see that some one does it.

As for Mr. Francis Parkman, proposed by myself, I suppose his reputation is too solidly fixed as a scholar and a writer to need any words from me or others of his friends who may be present.

He has been a great sufferer from infirmities which do not prevent him from being very good company, and which I have thought the good company he would find at the Saturday Club would perhaps enable him to forget for a while more readily. It has seemed to me so clear that he ought to belong to the club, if he were inclined to join it, that I should have nominated him long ago had I not labored under the impression that he must have been previously proposed. . . .

Yours very truly, O. W. Holmes.

For many years it seemed that time stood still with the Autocrat. His happy home and his cheerful temper appeared to stay the hand of the destroyer. At last a long illness fell upon his wife; and after her death, when his only daughter, who had gone to keep her father's house, was suddenly taken from his

side, the shadows of age gathered about him; then we learned that he was indeed an old man.

For the few years that remained to him before his summons came he accepted the lot of age with extraordinary good cheer. His hearing became very imperfect. "I remind myself sometimes," he said, "of those verses I wrote some years ago. I wonder if you would remember them! I called the poem 'The Archbishop and Gil Blas: A Modernized Version.'" He then repeated with great humor and pathos a few of the lines: —

> "*Can you read as once you used to?* Well, the printing is so bad,
> No young folks' eyes can read it like the books that once we had.
> *Are you quite as quick of hearing?* Please to say that once again.
> *Don't I use plain words, your Reverence?* Yes, I often use a cane."

"As to my sight," he continued, "I have known for some years that I have cataracts slowly coming over my eyes; but they increase so very slowly that I often wonder which will win the race first — the cataracts or death."

He was most carefully watched over during the succeeding years of disability by his distinguished son and his daughter-in-law, of whose talent he was sincerely proud. Nevertheless, he suffered of necessity many lonely hours, in spite of all that devotion could do for him.

Such a wife and such a loving daughter could not pass from his side and find their places filled. But he did not "mope," as he wrote me one day, "I am too busy for that;" or, he might have said truthfully, too well sustained. His habit of carrying himself with an air of kindliness toward all, and of enjoyment in the opportunities still left him, was very beautiful and unusual. "If the Lord thinks it best for me to stay until I tumble to pieces, I'm willing — I'm willing," he said. He was always capable of amusing his friends on the subject, as in the former days when Old Age came and offered him "a cane, an eyeglass, a tippet, and a pair of overshoes. 'No; much obliged to you,' said I. . . . So I dressed myself up in a jaunty way, and walked out alone; got a fall, caught a cold, was laid up with lumbago, and had time to think over the whole matter."

Who that heard him can ever forget the exquisite reading of "The Last Leaf" at the Longfellow memorial meeting. The pathos of it was then understood for the first time. The poem had become an expression of his later self, and it was given with a personal significance which touched the hearts of all his hearers.

His wit has left the world sparkling with the shafts it has let fly on every side. They are taken up continually and sent out again both by those who heard him utter them and by

those who repeat them, unmindful of their origin.

His attention was turned on some occasion to a young aspirant for artistic fame. He referred to the youthful person later as "one who performed a little on the lead pencil." He said to me one day, "I 've sometimes made new words. In 'Elsie Venner' I made the word 'chrysocracy,' thinking it would take its place; but it did n't: 'plutocracy,' meaning the same thing, was adopted instead. Oddly enough, I had a letter from a man to-day, asking if I did not make the word 'anæsthesia,' which I certainly did."

In the sick-room he was always a welcome guest. A careful maid once asked if he minded climbing two flights of stairs to see his friend. "I laughed when she asked me," he said; "for I shall have to climb a good many more than that before I see the angels."

"I gave two dinners to two parties of old gentlemen just before I left town," he said, the year before his death; and then added, "our baby was seventy-three!"

His letters in the later years were full of feeling. He says in one of them, written on a Christmas day, speaking of an old friend: "How many delightful hours the photographs bring back to me! . . . Under his roof I have met more visitors to be remembered than under any other. But for his hospitality I should

never have had the privilege of personal acquaintance with famous writers and artists whom I can now recall as I saw them, talked with them, heard them, in that pleasant library, that most lively and agreeable dining-room. How could it be otherwise, with such guests as he entertained, and with his own unflagging vivacity and his admirable social gifts? Let me live in happy recollections to-day."

Only two years before Dr. Holmes's death he said in a letter received by me in Italy: "But for this troublesome cold, which has so much better come out than I feared, I have been doing well enough — kept busy with letters and dictation of my uneventful history. It is strange how forgotten events and persons start out of the blank oblivion in which they seem to have been engulfed, as I fix my memory steadily on the past. I find it very easy, even fascinating, to call up the incidents, trivial oftentimes, but having for me a significance of their own, which lie in my past track like the broken toys of childhood. It seems as if the past was for each of us a great collection of negatives laid away, from which we can take positive pictures when we will — from many of them, that is; for only the Recording Angel can reproduce the pictures of every instant of our lives from these same negatives, of which he must have an infinite collection, with which sooner or later we are liable to be confronted."

In another letter from Beverly Farms, when he was eighty-three, he says: —

Where this will find you, in a geographical point of view, I do not know; but I know your heart will be in its right place, and accept kindly the few barren words this sheet holds for you. Yes; barren of incident, of news of all sorts, but yet having a certain flavor of Boston, of Cape Ann, and, above all, of dear old remembrances, the suggestion of any one of which is as good as a page of any common letter. So, whatever I write will carry the fragrance of home with it, and pay you for the three minutes it costs you to read it. . . . I find great delight in talking over cathedrals and pictures and English scenery, and all the sights my traveling friends have been looking at, with Mrs. Bell. It seems to me that she knew them all beforehand, so that she was journeying all the time among reminiscences which were hardly distinguishable from realities.

My recollections are to those of other people around me who call themselves old, — the sexagenarians, for instance, — something like what a cellar is to the ground-floor of a house. The young people in the upper stories (American spelling, *story*) go down to the basement in their inquiries, and think they have got to the bottom; but I go down another flight of steps, and find myself below the surface of the earth,

as are the bodies of most of my contemporaries. As to health, I am doing tolerably well. I have just come in from a moderate walk in which I acquitted myself creditably. I take two-hour drives in the afternoon, in the open or close carriage, according to the weather; but I do not pretend to do much visiting, and I avoid all excursions when people go to have what they call a "good time."

I am reading right and left — whatever turns up, but especially re-reading old books. Two new volumes of Dr. Johnson's letters have furnished me part of my reading. As for writing, when my secretary — Miss Gaudelet — comes back, I shall resume my dictation. No literary work ever seemed to me easier or more agreeable than living over my past life, and putting it on record as well as I could. If anybody should ever care to write a sketch or memoir of my life, these notes would help him mightily. My friends too might enjoy them — if I do not have the misfortune to outlive them all. With affectionate regards and all sweet messages to Miss Jewett.

Always your friend,
O. W. Holmes.

This letter gives a very good picture of his life to the end. Few incidents occurred to break the even current of the order he describes. He still dined out occasionally, and I find a few

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reminiscences of his delightful talk which linger with me.

"I've several things bothering me," he confessed one day. "First, I am anxious to find a suitable inscription for a child's porringer. I never wrote a poem to a child, I believe. I love children dearly; I always want to stop them on the street: but I have never written about them; nor have I ever written much about women. I don't know why, but I *care* too much to do the Tom Moore style of thing."

He was eager to frame a letter to President Eliot, and also one to President Cleveland, in order to advance some one in need of help; but the grasshopper had become a burden. "I feel such things now when I have to do them," he said; "nevertheless, when young men and maidens come skipping in with an air of saying, 'Please give me your autograph, and be quick about it; there may not be much time left,' I want to say, 'Take care, young folks; I may be dancing over your graves yet!'"

There was a clock which stood upon his table, the bequest of Dr. Henry J. Bigelow. This remembrance from his dying friend was one of his most valued possessions. He loved to talk of Dr. Bigelow, and in a published discourse he has said of him: "He read men and women as great scholars read books. He took life at first hand, and not filtered through al-

phabets. . . . He would get what he wanted out of a book as dexterously as a rodent will get the meat of a nut out of its shell. . . . He handled his rapidly acquired knowledge so like an adept in book-lore that one might have thought he was born in an alcove and cradled on a book-shelf." Dr. Bigelow was so frequently in Dr. Holmes's thought in the latter days that one can hardly give a picture of his later life without rehearsing something of his expression with regard to him. He says further: "Dr. Bigelow was unquestionably a man of true genius. . . . Inexorable determination to have the truth, if nature could be forced to yield it, characterized his powerful intelligence."

The doctor would often look up when the little clock was striking musically on his writing-table, and say, "It always reminds me tenderly of my dead friend."

When the time came that writing was a burden, and indeed, except for limited periods, impossible, Dr. Holmes lived more and more in his affections. Often, as I entered his room on a dull afternoon, he would say, "Ah, now let's sit up by the fire and talk of all our friends." Then would begin a series of opinions, witty and tender by turns, and interspersed with tears and smiles. On one such occasion he said: "There are very few modern hymns which have the old ring of saintliness in them. Sometimes when I am disinclined to listen to

the preacher at church, I turn to the hymn-book, and when one strikes my eye, I cover the name at the bottom, and guess. It is almost invariably Watts or Wesley ; after those, there are very few which are good for much.

"'Calm on the listening ear of night'

is a fine hymn, but even that lacks the virility of the old saints."

Our minds that day were full of one thought, — the death of Phillips Brooks, — and when, a moment later, he said : —

"'Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood'—

there is nothing like that," it seemed quite natural that his voice should break and the tears come as he added, without mentioning the bishop's name, "How hard it is to think he is gone ! I don't like to feel that I must live without him."

His days grew gradually shorter, as the days of late October dwindle into golden noons. During the few hours when he was at his best he was wonderfully active, driving to his publisher's or to make an occasional visit, besides a daily walk. If to those who saw him continually the circle of his subjects of conversation began to appear somewhat circumscribed, upon those who met him only occasionally the old fascination still exerted itself. He set his door wide open when he made up his mind to receive and converse with any human being.

There is nothing left to say of him which he did not cheerfully and truthfully say of himself. "I am intensely interested in my own personality," he began one day; "but we are all interesting to ourselves, or ought to be. I *know* I am, and I see why. We take, as it were, a mold of our own thought. Now let us compare it with the mold of another man on the same subject. His mold is either too large or too small, or the veins and reticulations are altogether different. No one mold fits another man's thought. It is our own, and as such has especial interest and value."

It was really amazing to see his intellectual vigor in society even at this late period. When the conditions were satisfactory, at a small luncheon for instance, he would soon grow warm with excitement, his eyes would glow, and he would talk with his accustomed fire. He was like an old war-horse hearing the trumpet that called to battle. His activity and versatility of mind could still distance many a clever man in the prime of life.

He responded in the most generous way to the expectations of strangers and foreigners who came to visit him as if on pilgrimage. He always found some entertainment for them. Sometimes he would read them one of his poems; sometimes he would have a pretty scientific toy for their amusement; or again he would write his autograph in a volume of his

works for them to carry away in remembrance. Such guests could not help feeling that they had seen more than the Dr. Holmes of their imagination. He entered into their curiosity regarding himself with such charming sympathy that they came away thinking the half-hour they had passed in his study was one always to be remembered.

As I think of those latest days, I recall what he himself wrote once, long ago, about old age: "One that remains walking," he says, "while others have dropped asleep, and keeps a little night-lamp flame of life burning year after year, if the lamp is not upset and there is only a careful hand held round it to prevent the puffs of wind from blowing the flame out. That 's what I call an old man."

"Now," said the professor, "you don't mean to tell me that I have got to that yet? Why, bless you, I am several years short of the time!"

Dr. Holmes left this world, which he had found pleasant and had filled with pleasantness for others, after an illness that was happily brief. He passed, in the words of that great physician, Sir Thomas Browne, "in drowsy approaches of sleep; . . . believing with those resolved Christians who, looking on the death of this world but as a nativity of another, do contentedly submit unto the common necessity, and envy not Enoch or Elias."

DAYS WITH MRS. STOWE

DAYS WITH MRS. STOWE

In recalling Mrs. Stowe's life, with the remembrance of what she has been to her friends, to her country, and to the world, I am overborne by the sense of a soul instinct from its early consciousness with power working in her beyond her own thought or knowledge or will. Her attitude seemed by nature to be that of contemplation. Her heart was like a burning coal laid upon the altar of humanity; and when she stole up, as it were, in the night and laid it down for the slave with tears and supplications, it awakened neither alarm nor wonder in her spirit that in the morning she saw a bright fire burning there and lighting the whole earth.

Mrs. Stowe had already passed through this great experience when I saw her for the first time in Italy. It was only a few weeks before the war against slavery was openly declared, and she was like one who having "done all" must now "stand." This year indeed was one of the happiest of her life. She did not yet see the terrible feet of War already close upon us, yet she was convinced that the end of slavery was at hand. She was released at last from the

toils which poverty had laid upon her overtasked body. Her children were with her, and she was enjoying, as few persons know how to enjoy, the loveliness of Italy. She delighted, too, in the congenial society of Mr. and Mrs. Browning and the agreeable friends who were that winter grouped around them. After her long trial and her years of suffering she was to have "her day" in the world of beauty and love which lay about her.

In one of her early letters to Georgiana May, in 1833, she says, speaking of some relaxation which had come to her friend: "How good it would be for me to be put into a place which so breaks up and precludes thought. Thought, intense emotional thought, has been my disease. How much good it might do me to be where I could not but be thoughtless." This letter was written when she was twenty-two years old, and there had never been any respite in her life until those sweet Italian days of the winter of 1859 and '60.

It was only about a year later than the date of the above letter when the subject of slavery was first brought under her own observation during a brief visit in Kentucky. Her father had received a call in Boston, where he had been preaching for six years, to go to Cincinnati, which at that period was considered the far West and almost like banishment; but the call was one not to be refused; the need of

such preaching as Dr. Beecher's being greatly felt at that distant post. About a year after their arrival an invitation came to Harriet to cross the river and to see something of Kentucky in company with a young friend. She found herself on the estate which was later known as Colonel Shelby's in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Her companion said later, in recalling their experience: "Harriet did not seem to notice anything in particular that happened, but sat most of the time as though abstracted in thought. When the negroes did funny things and cut up capers, she did not seem to pay the slightest attention to them. Afterwards, however, in reading Uncle Tom, I recognized scene after scene of that visit portrayed with the utmost fidelity, and knew at once where the material for that part of the story had been gathered."

To show how completely her "style" was herself, there is a passage from one of her early letters describing her experience at Niagara which burns with her own fire. "Let me tell you," she says, "if I can, what is unutterable. . . . I did not once think if it were high or low; whether it roared or did n't roar. . . . My mind whirled off, it seemed to me, in a new strange world. . . . That rainbow, breaking out, trembling, fading, and again coming like a beautiful spirit walking the waters. Oh, it is lovelier than it is great; it is like the Mind that made

it ; great, but so veiled in beauty that we gaze without terror. I felt as if I could have gone over with the waters ; it would be so beautiful a death ; there would be no fear in it. I felt the rock tremble under me with a sort of joy. I was so maddened I could have gone, too, if that had gone."

The first wife of Mr. Stowe was her most intimate friend, and his suffering at her death moved her to intense pity, which finally ripened into love. At the last moment of her maidenhood she wrote again to Georgiana May : "In about half an hour more your old friend, companion, schoolmate, sister, etc., will cease to be Hatty Beecher and change to nobody knows who. My dear, you are engaged and pledged in a year or two to encounter a similar fate, and do you wish to know how you shall feel ? Well, my dear, I have been dreading and dreading the time, and lying awake all last week wondering how I should live through this overwhelming crisis, and lo ! it has come and I feel *nothing at all.*"

Her marriage with Professor Stowe was a congenial one. He discovered very early what her career must be and wrote to her once during a brief absence : "God has written it in his book that you must be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God ?" His admiration for her was perfect, a feeling which she reciprocated in a somewhat

different form. "I did not know," she once wrote to him, "until I came away how much I was dependent upon you for information. There are a thousand favorite subjects on which I could talk with you better than with any one else. If you were not already my dearly loved husband, I should certainly fall in love with you."

She can speak to him with an openness which she uses to no one else; she says, and in this sentence she gives the secret of much which has appeared inexplicable to the world: "One thing more in regard to myself. The absence and wandering of mind and forgetfulness that so often vexes you is a physical infirmity with me. It is the failing of a mind not calculated to endure a great pressure of care, and so much do I feel the pressure I am under, so much is my mind darkened and troubled by care that life seriously holds out few allurements, — only my children." She used to say laughingly sometimes in later years, "My brother Henry and I are something like anacondas: we have our winter; when we are tired we curl up and disappear, within ourselves, as it were; nobody can get anything out of us; we move about and attend to our affairs and appear like other folks perhaps, but we are not there."

The trouble was that no one could be prepared for these vanishings, not even herself. Perhaps a dinner company of invited guests

were eagerly listening to her conversation, when at some suggestion of a new train of ideas, she would suddenly become silent and hardly speak again. Occasionally at a reception she would wander away, only to be found strolling about in the conservatory, if there were one, or quietly observant in some coign of vantage where she was not likely to be disturbed.

My first meeting with Mrs. Stowe found her in one of her absent moods. We were in Florence, and she was delighting herself in the fascinations of that lovely city. Not alone every day but every second as it passed was full of eager interest to her.

She could say with Thoreau, "I moments live who lived but years." We had both been invited to a large reception, on a certain evening, in one of the old palaces on the Arno. There were music and dancing, and there were lively groups of ladies and gentlemen strolling from room to room, contrasting somewhat strangely in their gayety with the solemn pictures hanging on the walls, and a sense of shadowy presence which seems to haunt those dusky interiors. An odd discrepancy between the modern company and the surroundings, a weird mingling of the past and the present, made any apparition appear possible, and left room only for a faint thrill of surprise when a voice by my side said, "There is Mrs. Stowe."

In a moment she approached and I was presented to her, and after a brief pause she passed on. All this was natural enough, but a wave of intense disappointment swept over me. Why had I found no words to express or even indicate the feeling that had choked me? Was the fault mine? Oh, yes, I said to myself, for I could not conceive it to be otherwise, and I looked upon my opportunity, the gift of the gods, as utterly and forever wasted. I was depressed and sorrowing over the vanishing of a presence I might perhaps never meet again, and no glamour of light, or music or pictures or friendly voices could recall any pleasure to my heart. Meanwhile, the unconscious object of all this disturbance was strolling quietly along, leaning on the arm of a friend, hardly ever speaking, followed by a group of traveling companions, and entirely absorbed in the gay scene around her. She was a small woman; and her pretty curling hair and far-away dreaming eyes, and her way of becoming occupied in what interested her until she forgot everything else for the time, all these I first began to see and understand as I gazed after her retreating figure.

Mrs. Stowe's personal appearance has received scant justice and no mercy at the hand of the photographer. She says herself, during her triumphal visit to England after the publication of "Uncle Tom:" "The general topic

of remark on meeting me seems to be that I am not so bad looking as they were afraid I was; and I do assure you, when I have seen the things that are put up in the shop windows here with my name under them, I have been lost in wondering imagination at the boundless loving-kindness of my English and Scottish friends in keeping up such a warm heart for such a Gorgon. I should think that the Sphinx in the London Museum might have sat for most of them. I am going to make a collection of these portraits to bring home to you. There is a great variety of them, and they will be useful, like the Irishman's guideboard which showed 'where the road did not go.'" I remember once accompanying her to a reception at a well-known house in Boston, where, before the evening was over, the hostess drew me aside, saying, "Why did you never tell me that Mrs. Stowe was beautiful?" And indeed, when I observed her in the full ardor of conversation, with her heightened color, her eyes shining and awake, but filled with great softness, her abundant curling hair rippling naturally about her head and falling a little at the sides (as in the portrait by Richmond), I quite agreed with the lady of the house. Nor was that the first time her beauty had been revealed to me, but she was seldom seen to be beautiful by the great world, and the pleasure of this recognition was very great to those who loved her.

She was never afflicted with a personal consciousness of her reputation, nor was she trammeled by it. The sense that a great work had been accomplished through her only made her more humble, and her shy, absent-minded ways were continually throwing her admirers into confusion. Late in life (when her failing powers made it impossible for her to speak as one living in a world which she seemed to have left far behind) she was accosted, I was told, in the garden of her country retreat, in the twilight one evening, by a good old retired sea captain who was her neighbor for the time. "When I was younger," said he respectfully, holding his hat in his hand while he spoke, "I read with a great deal of satisfaction and instruction 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' The story impressed me very much, and I am happy to shake hands with you, Mrs. Stowe, who wrote it." "I did not write it," answered the white-haired old lady gently, as she shook the captain's hand. "You did n't?" he ejaculated in amazement. "Why, who did, then?" "God wrote it," she replied simply. "I merely did his dictation." "Amen," said the captain reverently, as he walked thoughtfully away.

This was the expression in age of what lay at the foundation of her life. She always spoke and behaved as if she recognized herself to be an instrument breathed upon by the Divine Spirit. When we consider how this idea ab-

sorbed her to the prejudice of what appeared to others a wholesome exercise of human will and judgment, it is not wonderful that the world was offended when she once made conclusions contrary to the opinion of the public, and thought best to publish them.

Mrs. Stowe was a delightful talker. She loved to gather a small circle of friends around a fireside, when she easily took the lead in fun and story telling. This was her own ground, and upon it she was not to be outdone. "Let me put my feet upon the fender," she would say, "and I can talk till all is blue."

It appeared to those who listened most frequently to her conversation that a large part of the charm of her tales was often lost in the writing down; yet with all her unusual powers she was an excellent listener herself. Her natural modesty was such that she took keen pleasure in gathering fresh thought and inspiration from the conversation of others. Nor did the universal homage she received from high and low leave any unworthy impression upon her self-esteem. She was grateful and pleased and humble, and the only visible effect produced upon her was the heightened pleasure she received from the opportunities of knowing men and women who excited her love and admiration. Her name was a kind of sacred talisman, especially in New and Old England. It was a banner which had led men to battle

against slavery. Therefore it was often a cause of surprise and social embarrassment when the bearer of this name proved to be sometimes too modest, and sometimes too absent-minded, to remember that anything was expected of her or anything arranged for her special entertainment.

She was utterly taken by surprise once in a foreign city by being invited out to breakfast, as she supposed privately, and finding herself suddenly in a large hall, upon a raised platform crowded with local dignitaries, and greeted before she could get her breath by a chorus of children's voices singing an anthem in her honor, especially composed for the occasion. Her love of fun was greatly excited by this unexpected situation, and she used to relate the anecdote, with details about her unprepared condition which were irresistibly amusing. In a letter home she refers incidentally to the large breakfast party and says: "I could not help wondering if old mother Scotland had put into 'the father of all the tea-kettles' two thousand teaspoonfuls of tea for the company and one for the teapot, as is our good Yankee custom."

The tributes paid to her were ceaseless, and her house in Hartford testifies to many of them. "There," as her friend and neighbor the Reverend Joseph Twichell wrote once in a brief sketch of her — a sketch full of deep

feeling — "there, an observant stranger would soon discover whose house he was in, and be reminded of the world-wide distinction her genius has won and of that great service of humanity with which her name is forever identified. He would, for instance, remark on its pedestal in the bow-window a beautiful bronze statuette by Cumberworth called 'The African Woman of the Fountain,' and on an easel in the back parlor a lovely engraving of the late Duchess of Sutherland and her daughter — a gift from her son, the present Duke of that name, subscribed 'Mrs. Stowe, with the Duke of Sutherland's kind regards, 1869.' Should he look into a low oaken case standing in the hall, he would find there the twenty-six folio volumes of the 'Affectionate and Christian Address of Many Thousands of Women in Great Britain and Ireland to their Sisters in the United States of America' pleading the cause of the slave, and signed with over half a million names, which was delivered to Mrs. Stowe in person at a notable gathering at Stafford House, in England, in 1853; and with it similar addresses from the citizens of Leeds, of Glasgow, and Edinburgh, presented at about the same time. The house, indeed, is a treasury of such relics, testimonials of reverence and regard, trophies of renown from many lands, enough to furnish a museum, all of the highest historic interest and value. . . . There are relics, too, of

more private sort; for example, a smooth stone of two or three pounds weight, and a sketch or study of it by Ruskin made at a hotel on Lake Neuchâtel, where he and Mrs. Stowe chanced to meet. . . . One of her most prized possessions is a gold chain of ten links, which, on occasion of the gathering at Stafford House that has been referred to, the Duchess of Sutherland took from her own arm and clasped upon Mrs. Stowe's, saying, 'This is the memorial of a chain which we trust will soon be broken.' On several of the ten links were engraved the great dates in the annals of emancipation in England; and the hope was expressed that she would live to add to them other dates of like import in the progress of liberty this side the Atlantic. That was in 1853. Twelve years later every link had its inscription, and the record was complete."

It was my good fortune to be in Mrs. Stowe's company once in Rome when she came unexpectedly face to face with an exhibition of the general feeling of reverence and gratitude towards herself. We had gone together to the rooms of the brothers Castellani, the world-famous workers in gold. The collection of antique gems and the beautiful reproductions of them were new to us. Mrs. Stowe was full of enthusiasm, and we lingered long over the wonderful things which the brothers brought forward to show. Among them was the head of an Egyp-

tian slave carved in black onyx. It was an admirable work of art, and while we were enjoying it one of them said to Mrs. Stowe, "Madam, we know what you have been to the poor slave. We ourselves are but poor slaves still in Italy: you feel for us; will you keep this gem as a slight recognition of what you have done?" She took the jewel in silence; but when we looked for some response, her eyes were filled with tears, and it was impossible for her to speak.

This feeling often found less refined manifestation. One day when she was shopping in Boston, after making her purchase she gave her name in a low but distinct voice to the clerk who was to send the goods. "Dear me," said a lively woman, audibly by my side, "I should be ashamed to give that name; I should as soon think of giving Angel Gabriel!" Of course we were all greatly amused by this sally, but Mrs. Stowe smiled quietly according to her wont and passed on.

Great human tenderness was one of her chief characteristics. Although she was a reformer by nature there was no sternness in her composition. Forgetfulness of others there was certainly sometimes, arising from her hopeless absent-mindedness and the preoccupation consequent upon her work; but her whole life was swayed and ruled by her affections.

Her love was a sheet anchor which held in the stormiest seas. Of her household devotion

it is impossible to speak fitly; but there are few natures that can be said to have been more dependent upon human love. Her tender ways were inexpressibly touching.

Early in life she had written to her brother while hardly more than a girl: "I wish I could bring myself to feel perfectly indifferent to the opinions of others. I believe there never was a person more dependent on the good and evil opinions of those around than I am. This desire to be loved forms, I fear, the great motive for all my actions."

Such a nature was quite unlikely to play the part of a famous woman of the world with any success, and she did not attempt it. She was always reaching out to the friends of her adoption and drawing them closer to her side.

In those days of our early acquaintance in Italy we had ample opportunity to discover the affectionate qualities of her character. If my first interview was a disappointment, her second greeting a few days later had the warmth of old acquaintance. From that moment we (my husband and I) were continually meeting her, in galleries and out of them; at Bellosguardo, which Hawthorne had just quitted, but where Isa Blagden and Frances Power Cobbe still lingered, or in Florence itself with Francesca Alexander and her family; at the Trollopes', or elsewhere, while our evenings were commonly spent in each other's apartments.

As the hours of our European play-days drew near the end, she began to lay plans for returning home in the steamer with those who had grown dear to her, and in one of her notes of that period she wrote to me : —

"On the strength of having heard that you were going home in the Europa June 16th, we also have engaged passage therein for that time, and hope that we shall not be disappointed. . . . It must be true, we can't have it otherwise. . . . Our Southern Italy trip was a glory — it was a rose — a nightingale — all, in short, that one ever dreams ; but alas ! it is over."

It was a delightful voyage homeward in every sense. At that period a voyage was no little matter of six days, but a good fourteen days of sitting together on deck in pleasant summer weather, and having time enough and to spare. Hawthorne and his family also concluded to join the party. Mrs. Hawthorne, who was always the romancer in conversation, filled the evening hours by weaving magic webs of her fancies, until we looked upon her as a second Scheherazade, and the day the head was to be cut off was the day we should come to shore. "Oh," said Hawthorne, "I wish we might never get there." But the good ship moved steadily as fate. Meanwhile, Mrs. Stowe often took her turn at entertaining the little group. She was seldom tired of relating stories of New England life and her early experiences.

When the ship came to shore, Mrs. Stowe and her daughters went at once to Andover, where Professor Stowe had remained at his post during their long absence in Europe. She went also with equal directness to her writing-desk; and though there are seldom any dates upon her letters, the following note must have been written shortly after her return: —

My dear Mr. Fields, — "Agnes of Sorrento" was conceived on the spot, — a spontaneous tribute to the exceeding loveliness and beauty of all things there.

One bright evening, as I was entering the old gateway, I saw a beautiful young girl sitting in its shadow selling oranges. She was my Agnes. Walking that same evening through the sombre depths of the gorge, I met "Old Elsie," walking erect and tall, with her piercing black eyes, Roman nose, and silver hair, — walking with determination in every step, and spinning like one of the Fates glittering silver flax from a distaff she carried in her hands.

A few days after, our party, being weather-bound at Salerno, had resort to all our talents to pass the time, and songs and stories were the fashion of the day. The first chapter was my contribution to that entertainment. The story was voted into existence by the voices of all that party, and by none more enthusiastically than by one young voice which will never be

heard on earth more. It was kept in mind and expanded and narrated as we went on to Rome over a track that the pilgrim Agnes is to travel. To me, therefore, it is fragrant with love of Italy and memory of some of the brightest hours of life.

I wanted to write something of this kind as an author's introduction to the public. Could you contrive to print it on a fly-leaf, if I get it ready, and put a little sort of dedicatory poem at the end of it? I shall do this at least in the book, if not now.

A network of difficulties seems to have closed about her at this time, because in spite of her interest in the new story and the hopeful view which she took of its speedy completion, several months passed by before anything definite came respecting her literary plans.

Meanwhile she had been tempted into beginning a story for "The Independent," which proved to be "The Pearl of Orr's Island," a story good enough, if she had been left to herself and not overridden by greedy editors and publishers, to have added a lustre even to her name. It is to this she refers in the following letter when she speaks of her "Maine story." Unhappily this first number drew off power which belonged to "Agnes of Sorrento," and Agnes served to prevent her from ending "The Pearl of Orr's Island" in a manner worthy of its first promise.

She says, writing in January, 1861, "Authors are apt, I suppose, like parents, to have their unreasonable partialities. Everybody has, — and I have a pleasure in writing 'Agnes of Sorrento' that gilds this icy winter weather. I write my Maine story with a shiver, and come back to this as to a flowery home where I love to rest.

"My manuscripts are always left to the printers for punctuation, — as you will observe, — I have no time for copying."

Mrs. Stowe's health was not vigorous at this period. Incessant drafts upon her energy had enfeebled her; but her spirit was indomitable, and when she was weary a brief visit to Boston was, she considered, sufficient to restore her nervous force. During these visits she sometimes rehearsed the story of the early days of her married life, when she fought her way through difficulties and under the burden of sorrows which would have crushed many another woman.

The tale of the arrival of the family on a wintry day in Brunswick, Me., where her husband had been appointed to a professorship in Bowdoin College, of the dreary season, the bitter cold, the unopened door of an empty house, their future home, left a vivid impression upon the minds of her listeners; not because of its forlornness, but because of the splendid energy and patience which she brought to the occasion

and the light she was able to cast over the grimness of circumstance. Of course, at the date in which this is written, it is difficult to conceive anything like grimness as associated with the comfortable and social town of Brunswick, but we must not fail to remember how rapid the growth of winter comfort has been throughout New England. This house in the village of Brunswick was the birthplace of "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" but long before her pen could be allowed to touch the paper the door of the house must be unlocked, the fire made, and her little children warmed and fed. The walls too must be freshly papered and painted with her own unassisted hands, and a long table spread which could serve as a family dining-table and her own and only place for writing. Here, as Mr. Fields once said in one of his lectures, "A New England woman once wrote a great novel while beset with difficulties, pinched by poverty, and surrounded by hard work from sunrise to midnight, year in and year out. She was a pallid, earnest, tired little body, who sat in her white cottage down in Brunswick in the state of Maine. She had been busy all day, perhaps painting a room, for her means would not allow her to hire it done. Besides that labor she cooked for the family, and had done all her other household duties, without assistance, and without flinching or groaning. The children were hushed to sleep; all was still about the

house, and she trimmed the solitary lamp for a long session at her writing-table.

"Thus she sat many a night and wrote, and wept, and wrote again, until she had poured out her soul before the Lord for humanity's sake. And then came, a little slowly at first, but rolling surely with an awful sound, that great universal response; the voice of the people of the whole earth speaking as one."

The labor, the shock, were past, but the fatigue and the strain of the long struggle for freedom which she carried always on her own heart could never be over-lived. She was already, as Mrs. Hawthorne used to say, "tired far into the future." The woman who had written "Uncle Tom" was not to continue a series of equally exciting stories, but she was to bear the burden and heat of much every-day labor with the patience and the rejoicing of all faithful souls.

We are reminded, as we study Mrs. Stowe's life, of Swinburne's noble tribute to Sir Walter Scott after reading his Journals which appeared in full only five or six years ago. He says: "Now that we have before us in full — in all reasonable or desired completeness — the great man's own record of his troubles, his emotions, and his toils, we find it, from the opening to the close, a record, not only of dauntless endurance, but of elastic and joyous heroism. . . . It is no longer pity that any one may presume

to feel for him at the lowest ebb of his fortunes or his life; it is rapture of sympathy, admiration, and applause. 'This was a man.'"

The war, the enlistment of her second son, the eldest having already died, filled her heart and mind afresh with new problems and anxieties. She wrote the following hurried note from Hartford in 1862, which gives some idea of her occupations and frame of mind: "I am going to Washington to see the heads of departments myself, and to satisfy myself that I may refer to the Emancipation Proclamation as a reality and a substance, not a fizzle out at the little end of the horn, as I should be sorry to call the attention of my sisters in Europe to any such impotent conclusion. . . . I mean to have a talk with 'Father Abraham' himself, among others."

Mrs. Stowe lost no time, but proceeded to carry out her plan as soon as practicable. Of this visit to Washington she says little in her letters beyond the following meagre words: "It seems to be the opinion here, not only that the President will stand up to his proclamation, but that the Border States will accede to his proposition for emancipation. I have noted the thing as a glorious expectancy! . . . To-day to the home of the contrabands, seeing about five hundred poor fugitives eating a comfortable Thanksgiving dinner, and singing, 'Oh, let my people go!' It was a strange and moving sight."

It was left for others to speak of her interview with President Lincoln. Her daughter was told that when the President heard her name he seized her hand, saying, "Is this the little woman who made this great war?" He then led her apart to a seat in the window, where they were withdrawn from other guests, and undisturbed. No one but those two souls will ever know what waves of thought and feeling swept over them in that brief hour.

Afterwards she heard these words pronounced in the Senate Chamber in the Message of President Lincoln; it was in the darkest hour of the war, Mrs. Stowe wrote, when defeat and discouragement had followed the Union armies and all hearts were trembling with fear: "If this struggle is to be prolonged till there be not a home in the land where there is not one dead, till all the treasure amassed by the unpaid labor of the slave shall be wasted, till every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be atoned by blood drawn by the sword, we can only bow and say, 'Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints'!"

During her Boston visits Mrs. Stowe was always interested to observe the benevolent work going on about her and to lend a hand if it were possible. One incident flavored with a strong touch of the ludicrous still lingers in my memory. We had fallen in somewhere with a poor little waif of a boy, one easily to be recog-

nized by the practiced eye of to-day as a good specimen of the street Arab. This little being was taken up by us and brought home. His arrival was looked upon with horror by the servants, who recognized existing facts and foresaw future miseries veiled from our less educated vision. A visit to the bathroom was at once suggested; but as none of the house maidens offered to take charge of the business, Mrs. Stowe announced herself as more than equal to the occasion, and proceeded to administer the first bath probably ever known to that specimen of the human family. Hawthorne's clasping the leprous child was but a shadow compared to that hour, but happily Mrs. Stowe was not Hawthorne and she combed and scrubbed faithfully.

I cannot recall the precise ending of the tale. I can only remember the whole house being aroused at some unearthly hour of that night by the child's outcries, from his unusual indulgence in a good supper, and Mrs. Stowe's amusement at the situation. She declared the household was far better constituted to look after young cherubim than young male humans. Something of the canary-bird order would be much more in its line, she said. I believe he ran away the next day, probably understanding the fitness of things better than ourselves. At any rate I find a comforting note on the subject from Andover saying: "If we can do no

more we must let him go. He certainly stands a better chance in his life's journey for the little good we have been able to put into him. When we try a little to resist the evil current and to pull here and there one out, we learn how dreadful is the downward gravitation, the sweep and whirl of the maelstrom. Let us hope all these have a Father, who charges himself with them somewhere further on in their eternal pilgrimage when our weak hold fails."

In the autumn of 1862 a plan for leaving Andover altogether was finally matured. She wrote, "You have heard that we are going to Hartford to live, and I am now in all the bustle of house planning, to say nothing of grading, under-draining, and setting out trees around our future home. It is four acres and a half of lovely woodland on the banks of a river and yet within an easy walk of Hartford; in fact, in the city limits; and when our house is done you and yours must come and see us. I would rather have made the change in less troublous times, but the duties here draw so hardly on Mr. Stowe's strength that I thought it better to live on less and be in a place of our own, and with no responsibilities except those of common gentlefolk."

Mrs. Stowe's love of home, of the fireside, and her faith in family ties were marked characteristics of her nature. For the first time in her life she was now to make the material house at

least after her own idea, and for many months she was entirely absorbed in the enjoyment of forming plans for her Hartford home.

In November, 1862, she was in Hartford superintending the growing establishment. She wrote: "My house with *eight* gables is growing wonderfully. I go over every day to see it. I am busy with drains, sewers, sinks, digging, trenching, and above all with manure! You should see the joy with which I gaze on manure heaps in which the eye of faith sees Delaware grapes and D'Angoulême pears, and all sorts of roses and posies, all which at some future day I hope you will be able to enjoy.

"Do tell me if our friend Hawthorne praises that arch-traitor Pierce in his preface and your loyal firm publishes it. I never read the preface, and have not yet seen the book, but they say so here, and I can scarcely believe it of you, if I can of him. I regret that I went to see him last summer. What! patronize such a traitor to our faces! I can scarce believe it."

In the month of May, 1863, came her first letter from the new place. Already we find that the ever-present need has driven her on to print her thoughts about "House and Home."

HARTFORD, OAKWOLD, May 1st.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I came here a month ago to hurry on the preparations for our house, in which I am now writing, in the high bow

window of Mr. Stowe's study, overlooking the wood and river. We are not moved in yet, only our things, and the house presents a scene of the wildest chaos, the furniture having been tumbled in and lying boxed and promiscuous.

I sent the sixth number of "House and Home" papers a week ago, and, not having heard from it, am a little anxious. I always want faith that a bulky manuscript will go safe, — for all I never lost one. . . . I should like to show you the result here when we are fairly in, and the spring leaves are out. It is the brightest, cheerfullest, homeliest home that you could see, — not even excepting yours.

The pursuit of literature under such circumstances is neither natural nor profitable. In Mrs. Stowe's case it proved that she was pursuing, not literature, but the necessities of life. Everything in the household economy now depended upon her; and however strong her tendencies were naturally, she no longer possessed the reserved strength to forge the work from her brain. In the writing of "Uncle Tom," great as were the odds against her, she had been preparing to that end from the moment of her birth. Her father's fiery powers of expression; her mother's nature absorbed in one still dream of love and duty; her own solitary childhood in spite of the enormous household in which she was brought up; above all her brood-

ing nature quietly absorbing and assimilating the knowledge and thought which were finding expression around her; the first years of married life in Cincinnati, where the slaves were continually harbored and assisted, notwithstanding the risks to life and property; — everything, in short, within and around her was nourishing the child of her genius which was to leap into being and gather the armies of America.

On the whole we may rather wonder at the high average value of the literary work by which she lived, especially when we follow the hints given in her letters of her interrupted and crowded existence.

In June, 1863, she says: "I wrote my piece in a sea of troubles. I had, as you see, to write by amanuensis, and yet my little senate of girls say they like it better than anything I have written yet." It was a touching characteristic to see how the "senate of girls," or of such household friends as she could muster wherever she might be, were always called in to keep up her courage and to give her a sympathetic stimulus. During the days when she was writing, it was never safe to be far away, for she was rapid as light itself, and before a brief hour was ended we were pretty sure to hear her voice calling "Do come, come and hear, and tell me how you like it."

Her June letter continues: "Can I begin to tell you what it is to begin to keep house in an

unfinished home and place, dependent on a carpenter, a plumber, a mason, a bell-hanger, who come and go at their own sweet will, breaking in, making all sorts of chips, dust, dirt, going off in the midst leaving all standing, — reappearing at uncertain intervals and making more dust, chips, and dirt. One parlor and my library have thus risen piecemeal by disturbance and convulsions. They are now almost done, and the last box of books is almost unpacked, but my head aches so with the past confusion that I cannot get up any feeling of rest. I can't enjoy — can't feel a minute to sit down and say 'it is done.'

"The fountain plays, the plants flourish, and our front hall minus the stair railing looks beautifully; my pictures are all hung in parlor and library, and yet I feel so unsettled. Well, in a month more perhaps I shall get my brains right side up."

The following year was made memorable in Mrs. Stowe's life by the marriage of her youngest daughter. Again I find that no description can begin to give as clearly as the glimpses in her own letters the multifarious responsibilities which beset her. She says: "I am in trouble, — have been in trouble ever since my turtle-doves announced their intention of pairing in June instead of August, because it entailed on me an immediate necessity of bringing everything out of doors and in to a state of complete-

ness for the wedding exhibition in June. The garden must be planted, the lawn graded, harrowed, rolled, seeded, and the grass up and growing, stumps got out and trees got in, conservatory made over, belts planted, holes filled, — and all by three very slippery sort of Irishmen who had rather any time be minding their own business than mine. I have back doorsteps to be made, and troughs, screens, and what not; papering, painting, and varnishing, hitherto neglected, to be completed; also spring house-cleaning; also dressmaking for one bride and three ordinary females; also —— and —— and ——'s wardrobes to be overlooked; also carpets to be made and put down; also a revolution in the kitchen cabinet, threatening for a time to blow up the whole establishment altogether." And so the letter proceeds with two more sheets, adding near the end: "I send you to-day a 'Chimney-Corner' on 'Our Martyrs,' which I have written out of the fullness of my heart. . . . It is an account of the martyrdom of a Christian boy of our own town of Andover, who died of starvation and want in a Southern prison on last Christmas Day."

Just one month before the marriage she writes again: "The wedding is indeed an absorbing whirlpool, but amid it all I have the next 'Chimney-Corner' in good train and shall send it on to-morrow or next day."

How small a portion of the world outside

can understand the lives of writers, actors, and those whose professions compel them to depend directly upon the public! No private joy, no private sorrow, no rest, no change, is recognized by this taskmaster. It is well: on the whole we would not have it otherwise; because those who can minister to the great Public embrace their profession in a spirit of conscious or unconscious self-denial. In either case the result is the same: development, advancement, and sometimes attainment.

The wedding is not two days over when another letter arrives full of her literary work, yet adding that she longs for rest and if we will only tell her where Campton is, whither we had gone, she would gladly join us. "I was a weary idiot," she continues, "by the time the wedding was over, and said 'yes ma'am' to the men and 'no sir' to the women in sheer imbecility."

Nevertheless she did not get to Campton, but kept on, with the exception of a few brief visits at Peekskill and elsewhere until the autumn. In one of her notes she says: "I have returned to my treadmill. A—— is to leave as soon as she can get ready, and I am trying to see her off — helping her to get her things together, and trying to induce her to take a new stand in a new place and make herself a respectable woman. When she is gone a load will be off my back. If it were not for the good that is

still left in our fellows our task would be easier than it is; we could cut them adrift and let them swim; but while we see much that may be turned to good account in them we hang on, or let them hang on, and our boat moves slow. So behold me fighting my good fight of womanhood against dust and disorganization and the universal downward tendency of everybody, hoping for easier times by and by."

With her heroic nature she was always ready to lead the forlorn hope. The child no one else was willing to provide for, the woman the world despised, were brought into her home and cared for as her own. Unhappily, her delicate health at this time (though she was naturally strong), her constant literary labors, her uncertain income, her private griefs, all united, caused her to fall short in ability to accomplish what she undertook; hence there were often crises from sudden illness and non-fulfillment of engagements which were very serious in their effects, but the elasticity of her spirits was something marvelous and carried her over many a hard place.

In the autumn of 1864 she wrote: "I feel I need to write in these days, to keep from thinking of things that make me dizzy and blind, and fill my eyes with tears so that I cannot see the paper. I mean such things as are being done where our heroes are dying as Shaw died. It is not wise that all our literature should run

in a rut cut through our hearts and red with our blood. I feel the need of a little gentle household merriment and talk of common things, to indulge which I have devised the following."

Notwithstanding her view of the need and her skillfully devised plans to meet it, she soon sent another epistle, showing how impossible it was to stem the current of her thought.

November 29, 1864.

My dear Friend, — I have sent my New Year's article, the result of one of those peculiar experiences which sometimes occur to us writers. I had planned an article, gay, sprightly, wholly domestic; but as I began and sketched the pleasant home and quiet fireside, an irresistible impulse *wrote for me* what followed, — an offering of sympathy to the suffering and agonized whose homes have forever been darkened. Many causes united at once to force on me this vision, from which generally I shrink, but which sometimes will not be denied, — will make itself felt.

Just before I went to New York two of my earliest and most intimate friends lost their oldest sons, captains and majors, — splendid fellows physically and morally, beautiful, brave, religious, uniting the courage of soldiers to the faith of martyrs, — and when I went to Brooklyn it seemed as if I were hearing some such

thing almost every day; and Henry, in his profession as minister, has so many letters full of imploring anguish, the cry of hearts breaking that ask help of him. . . .

It was during one of Mrs. Stowe's visits to Boston in the ensuing year that she chanced to talk with greater fullness and openness than she had done with us before on the subject of Spiritualism. In the simplest way she affirmed her entire belief in manifestations of the nearness and individual life of the unseen, and gave vivid illustrations of the reasons why her faith was thus assured. She never sought after such testimony, so far as I am aware, unless it may have been to sit with others who were interested, but her conclusions were definite and unvarying. At that period such a declaration of faith required a good deal of bravery; now the subject has assumed a different phase, and there are few thinking people who do not recognize a certain truth hidden within the shadows. She spoke with tender seriousness of "spiritual manifestations" as recorded in the New Testament and in the prophets. From his early youth her husband had possessed the peculiar power of seeing persons about him who could not be perceived by others; visions so distinct that it was impossible for him to distinguish at times between the real and the unreal. I recall one illustration which had oc-

curred only a few years previous to their departure from Andover. She had been called to Boston one day on business. Making her preparations hurriedly, she bade the household farewell, and rushed to the station, only to see the train go out as she arrived. There was nothing to do but to return home and wait patiently for the next train; but wishing not to be disturbed, she quietly opened a side door and crept noiselessly up the staircase leading to her own room, sitting down by her writing-table in the window. She had been seated about half an hour when Professor Stowe came in, looked about him with a preoccupied air, but did not speak to her. She thought his behavior strange, and amused herself by watching him; at last the situation became so extraordinary that she began to laugh. "Why," he exclaimed, with a most astonished air, "is that you? I thought it was one of my visions!"

It may seem a singular antithesis to say of the writer of one of the greatest stories the world has yet produced that she was not a student of literature. Books as a medium of the ideas of the age, and as the promulgators of morals and religion, were of course like the breath of her life; but a study of the literature of the past as the only true foundation for a literature of the present was outside the pale of her occupations, and for the larger portion of her life outside of her interest. During the

riper season of her activity with the pen, the necessity of studying style and the thoughts of others gained a larger hold upon her mind; but she always said, with a twinkle of amusement and pride, that she never could have done anything without Mr. Stowe. He knew everything, and all she had to do was to go to him. Of her great work she has written, in that noble introduction to the illustrated edition of "Uncle Tom" speaking of herself in the third person: "The story can less be said to have been composed by her than imposed upon her. . . . The book insisted upon getting itself into being, and would take no denial."

It is easily seen that it was neither a spirit of depreciation of knowledge nor lack of power to become a student which made her fail to obtain adjuncts indispensable to great writers, but her feet were led in other paths and her strength was needed for other ends. Madame George Sand said, writing of "Uncle Tom" soon after its publication: "If its judges, possessed with the love of what they call 'artistic work,' find unskillful treatment in the book, look well at them to see if their eyes are dry when they are reading this or that chapter. . . . I cannot say that Mrs. Stowe has talent, as one understands it in the world of letters, but she has genius, as humanity feels the need of genius, — the genius of goodness, not that of the rules of letters, but of the saint."

All her life she stimulated the activity of her pen rather by her sympathy with humanity than by studies of literature. In one of her letters she says: "You see whoever can write on home and family matters, on what people think of and are anxious about and want to hear from, has an immense advantage. The success of the 'House and Home Papers' shows me how much people want this sort of thing, and now I am bringing the series to a close I find I have ever so much more to say; in fact, the idea has come in this shape. . . . A set of papers for the next year to be called 'Christopher's Evenings,' which will allow great freedom and latitude; a capacity of striking anywhere when a topic seems to be in the public mind and that will comprise a little series of sketches or rather little groups of sketches out of which books may be made. You understand Christopher writes these for the winter-evening amusement of his family. One set will be entitled 'An Account of the Seven Little Foxes that spoil the Vines.' This will cover seven sketches of certain domestic troubles. Another set is the 'Cathedral; or, the Shrines of Home Saints,' under which I shall give certain sketches of home characters contrasting with that of the legends of the saints: the shirt-making, knitting, whooping-cough-tending saints, the Aunt Esthers and Aunt Marias. . . . Hum (her humming bird) is well — notwithstanding the dull

weather; we keep him in a sunny upper chamber and feed him daily on sugar and water, and he catches his own mutton."

Thus in swift succession we find, not only charming little idyls here and there like her story of "Hum the Son of Buzz" in the "Young Folks Magazine," being the tale of her captured and tamed humming-bird, but also "Little Foxes," "The Chimney-Corner," a volume of collected Poems, "Oldtown Folks," "Sam Lawson's Fireside Tales" and others, following with tireless rapidity, bearing the same stamp of living sympathy with difficulties of the time and breathing a spirit of helpfulness and faith.

At this period, as she had an accessible home in the pleasant city of Hartford, strangers and travelers often sought and found her. In one of her familiar notes of 1867 she wrote: "The Amberleys have written that they are coming to us to-morrow, and of all times, accordingly, our furnace must spring a leak. We are hoping to make all right before they get here, but I am really ashamed to show such weather at this time of year. Poor America! It 's like having your mother expose herself by a fit of ill temper before strangers. . . . Do, I beg, write to a poor sinner laboring under a book." And again, a little later: "*The book* is almost done — hang it! but done *well*, and will be a good thing for young men to read, and young women too, and so I 'll send you one. You 'll

find some things in it, I fancy, that I know and you don't, about the times before you were born, when I was 'Hush, hush, my dear-ing' in Cincinnati. . . . I smell spring afar off — sniff — do you? Any smell of violets in the distance? I think it comes over the water from the Pamfili Doria."

Among other responsibilities assumed by her at this time was that of getting Professor Stowe to consent to publish a book. This was no laughing matter; at first the book was planned merely as an article on the "Talmud" for the "Atlantic Magazine." Afterwards Professor Stowe enlarged the design. Later in speaking of his manuscript she says: "You must not scare him off by grimly declaring that you must have the *whole manuscript complete* before you set the printer to work; you must take the three quarters he brings you and at least make believe begin printing, and he will immediately go to work and finish up the whole; otherwise what with lectures and the original sin of laziness, it will all be indefinitely postponed. I want to make a crisis that he shall feel that *now* is the accepted time, and that this must be finished first and foremost."

And again she says: "My poor *Rab* has been sick with a heavy cold this week, and if it had n't been for me you would n't have had this article which I send in triumph. I plunged into the sea of Rabbis and copied Mr. Stowe's

insufferable chaldonic characters so that you might not have your life taken by wrathful printers. . . . Thus I have ushered into the world a document which I venture to say condenses more information on an obscure and curious subject than *any* in the known world — Hosanna!"

In these busy years she went away upon her Boston trips more and more rarely, but she writes after her return from one of them in 1868: "I don't think I *ever* enjoyed Boston so much as in this visit. Why was it! Every cloud seemed to turn out its silver lining, everybody was delightful, and the music has really done me good. I feel it all over me now. I think of it with a sober certainty of waking bliss! our little 'hub' is a grand 'hub.' Three cheers for it! . . . I have had sent me through the War Department a French poem which I think is full of real nerve and strength of feeling. I undertook the reading only as a duty, but found myself quite waked up. The indignation and the feeling with which he denounces modern skepticism, that worst of all unbelief, the denial of all good, all beauty, all generosity, all heroism, is splendid. He is a live man this, and I wish you would read his poem and send it to Longfellow, for it does one's heart good to see the French made the vehicle of so much real heroic sentiment. The description of a slave hunt is splendidly and bitterly satirical

and indignant and full of fine turns of language. Thank God *that* is over. No matter what happens to you and me, *that* great burden of sin and misery has tumbled off from our backs and rolled into the sepulchre, where it shall never arise more. . . . I have been the most industrious of beings since my return, and am steaming away on the obstacle that stands between me and my story, which I long to be at. . . . I want to get one or two special bits of information out of Garrison, and so instead of sending my letter at random to Boston I will trouble you (who have little or nothing to do!) to get this letter to him. *My own book*, instead of cooling, boils and bubbles daily and nightly, and I am pushing and spurring like fury to get to it. I work like a drag-horse, and I 'll *never* get in such a scrape again. It is n't my business to make up books, but to make them. I have lots to say." . . .

The story which had so taken possession of her mind and heart was "Oldtown Folks," the one which she at the time fancied the best calculated of all her works to sustain the reputation of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The many proofs of her own interest in it seem to show that she had been moved to a livelier and deeper satisfaction in this creation than in any of her later productions. She writes respecting it: "It is more to me than a story; it is my résumé of the whole spirit and body of

New England, a country that is now exerting such an influence on the civilized world that to know it truly becomes an object." But there were weary lengths of roads to be traveled by a woman already overladen with responsibilities and in delicate health before such a book could reach its consummation.

"I must cry you mercy," she begins one of the notes to her publisher, "and explain my condition to you as well as possible." The "condition" was frequently to be explained! Proofs were not ready when they were promised, the press was stopped, and both author and publisher required all the tender regard they really had for each other and all the patience they possessed to keep in tune. She says, "I am sorry to trouble you or derange your affairs, but one can't always tell in driving such horses as we drive where they are going to bring up."

She started off in this long journey very hopefully, writing that she would like to begin printing at once, because "to have the first part of my book in type will greatly assist me in the last." A month later she writes: "Here goes the first of my nameless story, of which I can only say it is as unlike everything else as it is like the strange world of folks I took it from. There is no fear that there will not be as much matter as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' — there will. There could be an endless quantity if I only

said all I can see and think that is strange and curious. I partake in ——'s disappointment that it is not done, but it is of that class of things that cannot be commanded; as my friend Sam Lawson (*vide* MSS.) says, 'There 's things that can be druv and then agin there 's things that can't,' and this is that kind — as had to be humored. Instead of rushing on, I have often turned back and written over with care, that nothing that I wanted to say might be omitted; it has cost me a good deal of labor to elaborate this first part, namely, to build my theatre and to introduce my actors. My labor has all, however, been given to the literary part. My printers always inform me that I know nothing of punctuation, and I give thanks that I have no responsibility for any of its absurdities! Further than beginning my sentence with a capital, I go not, — so I hope my friend Mr. Bigelow, who is a direct and lineal descendant of 'my Grandmother,' will put those things all right."

Who so well as authors can fully understand and sympathize with the burden of a long story in the head, long bills on the table, tempting offers to write for this and that in order to bring in two hundred dollars from a variety of pleasant editors who desire the name on their list, house and grounds to be looked after, cooks to be pacified, visits to be made; — it is no wonder that Mrs. Stowe wrote: "The thing has been

an awful tax and labor, for I have tried to do it well. I say also to you confidentially, that it has seemed as if every private care that could hinder me as woman and mother has been crowded into just this year that I have had this to do."

Happily more peaceful days were in store for her. Her daughters, now grown to womanhood, were beginning to take the reins of home work and government into their own hands; and as the darkest hour foreruns the dawn, so almost imperceptibly to herself her cares began to fade away from her.

A new era opened in Mrs. Stowe's life when she made her first visit to Florida, in the winter of 1867. She was tired and benumbed with care and cold. Suddenly the thought came to her that she would go to the South, herself, and see what the stories were worth which she was constantly hearing about its condition. In the mean time, if she could, she would enjoy the soft air, and find retirement in which she might continue her book. She says in one of her letters: —

"Winter weather and cold seem always a kind of nightmare to me. I am going to take my writing-desk and go down to Florida to F——'s plantation, where we have now a home, and abide there until the heroic agony of betweenity, the freeze and thaw of winter, is over, and then I doubt not I can write my three

hours a day. Meanwhile, I have a pretty good pile of manuscript. . . . The letters I have got about blossoming roses and loungers in linen coats, while we have been frozen and snowed up, have made my very soul long to be away. Cold weather really seems to torpify my brain. I write with a heavy numbness. I have not yet had a *good* spell of writing, though I have had all through the story abundant clairvoyance, and see just how it must be written; but for writing some parts I want *warm* weather, and not to be in the state of a 'froze and thawed apple.' . . . The cold affects me precisely as extreme hot weather used to in Cincinnati, — gives me a sort of bilious neuralgia. I hope to get a clear, bright month in Florida, when I can say something to purpose.

"I did want to read some of my story to you before I went. I have read it to my husband; and though one may think a husband a partial judge, yet mine is so nervous and so afraid of being bored that I feel as if it were something to hold him; and he likes it — is quite wakeful, so to speak, about it. All I want now, to go on, is a good *frame*, as father used to say about his preaching. I want calm, soft, even dreamy, enjoyable weather, sunshine and flowers. Love to dear A——, whom I so much want to see once more."

Unhappily, she could not get away so soon as she desired. There were contracts to be

signed and other business to arrange. These delays made her visit southward much shorter than she intended, but it proved to be only the introduction, the first brief chapter, as it were, of her future winter life in Florida. Before leaving she wrote as follows to her publisher: —

"I am so constituted that it is absolutely fatal to me to agree to have *any* literary work done at certain dates. I *mean* to have this story done by the 1st of September. It would be greatly for my pecuniary interest to get it done before that, because I have the offer of eight thousand dollars for the newspaper use of the story I am planning to write after it. But I am bound by the laws of art. Sermons, essays, lives of distinguished people, I can write to order at times and seasons. A story comes, grows like a flower, sometimes will and sometimes won't, like a pretty woman. When the spirits will help, I can write. When they jeer, flout, make faces, and otherwise maltreat me, I can only wait humbly at their gates, watch at the posts of their doors.

"This story grows even when I do not write. I spent a month in the mountains in Stockbridge *composing* before I wrote a word.

"I only ask now a good physical condition, and I go to warmer climes hoping to save time there. I put everything and everybody off that interferes with this, except 'Pussy Willow,' which will be a pretty story for a child's 'series.'"

At last she sailed away, about the 1st of March, 1867, with that delightful power of knowing what she wanted, and being content when she attained her end, which is too rare, alas! Her letters glowed and blossomed and shone with the fruit and flowers and sunshine of the South. It was hardly to be expected that her literary work could actually reach the printers' hands under these circumstances as rapidly as if she had been able to write at home: therefore it was with no sense of surprise that we received from her, during the summer of 1868, what proved to be a chapter of excuses instead of a chapter of her book: "I have a long story to tell you of *what* has prevented my going on with my story, which you must see would so occupy all the nerve and brain force I have that I have not been able to write a word except to my own children. To them in their needs I *must* write *chapters* which would otherwise go into my novel."

About this period she found herself able to come again to Boston for a few days' visit. There were often long croonings over the fire far into the night; her other-worldliness and abstractions brought with them a dreamy quietude, especially to those whose harried lives kept them only too much awake. Her coming was always a pleasure, for she made holidays by her own delightful presence, and she asked nothing more than what she found in the companionship of her friends.

After her return to Hartford and in December of the same year, I find some curious notes showing how easily she was attracted by new subjects of interest away from the work she had in hand; not that she saw it in that light, or was aware that her story was in the least retarded by such digressions, but her keen sympathy with everything and everybody made it more and more difficult for her to concentrate her power upon the long story which she considered after all of the first importance. She writes to the editor of the "Atlantic Monthly:" "I see that all the leading magazines have a leading article on 'Planchette.'

"There is a lady of my acquaintance who has developed more remarkable facts in this way than any I have ever seen; I have kept a record of these communications for some time past, and everybody is very much struck with them.

"I have material to prepare a very curious article. Shall you want it? And when?"

We can imagine the feeling of a publisher waiting for copy of her promised story on reading this note! Also the following of a few days later: —

"I am beginning a series of articles called 'Learning to Write,' designed to be helpful to a great many beginners. . . . I shall instance Hawthorne as a model and speak of his 'Note Book' as something which every young author aspiring to write should study. . . . My mate-

rials for the 'Planchette' article are really very extraordinary, . . . but I don't want to write it now when I am driving so hard upon my book. . . . It costs some patience to you and certainly to me to have it take so long, yet I have conscientiously done all I could, since I began. Now the end of it is in plain sight, but there is a good deal to be done to bring it out worthily, and I work upon it steadily and daily. I never put so much work into anything before."

A week later she says again: —

"I thank you very much for your encouraging words, for I really need them. I have worked so hard that I am almost tired. I hope that you will still continue to read, and that you will not find it dull. . . . I have received the books. What a wonderful fellow Hawthorne was!"

There is something truly touching to those who knew her in that phrase "almost tired." Indeed, she was truly tired through and through, and these later letters from which I have made the foregoing extracts are all written by an amanuensis.

Happily the time was near for a second flight to Florida, and she wrote with her own rested hand en route from Charleston: —

"Room fragrant with violets, banked up in hyacinths, flowers everywhere, windows open, birds singing."

She enclosed some fans, upon which she had

been painting flowers busily during the journey in order to send them back to Boston to be sold at a fair in behalf of the Cretans: "Make them do the Cretes all the good you can," she said.

It appears that by this time "Oldtown Folks" was fairly off her hands, and she was free once more. She evidently found Mandarin very much to her mind, and wrote contentedly therefrom, save for a vision of having to go to Canada in the early spring to obtain the copyright of her story.

The visits to Florida had now become necessary to her health. She saw the next step to take was to surrender her large house in Hartford and pass her winters altogether at the South. She wrote from Florida: "I am leaving the land of flowers on the 1st of June with tears in my eyes, but having a house in Hartford, it must be lived in. I wish you and —— would just come to see it. You have no idea what a lovely place it has grown to be, and I am trying to sell it as hard as a snake to crawl out of his skin. Thus on, till reason is pushed out of life. There's no earthly sense in having anything, — lordy massy, no! By the bye, I must delay sending you the ghost in the Captain Brown house till I can go to Natick and make a personal inspection of the premises and give it to you hot."

Her busy brain was again at work with new plans for future books and articles for maga-

zines. "Gladly would I fly to you on the wings of the wind," she says, "but I am a slave, a bound thrall to *work*, and I cannot work and play at the same time. After this year I hope to have a little rest, and above all things I won't be hampered with a serial to write. . . . We have sold out in Hartford."

All this routine of labor was to have a new form of interruption, which gave her intense joy. "I am doing just what you say," she wrote, "being first lady-in-waiting on his new majesty. He is very pretty, very gracious and good, and his little mamma and he are a pair. . . . I am getting to be an old fool of a grandma, and to think there is no bliss under heaven to compare with a baby." Later she wrote on the same subject: "You ought to see my baby. I have discovered a way to end the woman controversy. Let the women all say that they won't take care of the babies till the laws are altered. One week of this discipline would bring all the men on their marrow-bones. Only tell us what you want, they would say, and we will do it. Of course you may imagine me trailing after our little king, — first granny-in-waiting."

In the summer of 1869 there was a pleasant home at St. John's Wood, in London, which possessed peculiar attractions. Other houses were as comfortable to look at, other hedges

were as green, other drawing-rooms were gayer, but this was the home of George Eliot, and on Sunday afternoons the resort of those who desired the best that London had to give. Here it was that George Eliot told us of her admiration and deep regard, her affection, for Mrs. Stowe. Her reverence and love were expressed with such tremulous sincerity that the speaker won our hearts by her love for our friend. Many letters had already passed between Mrs. Stowe and herself, and she confided to us her amusement at a fancy Mrs. Stowe had taken that Casaubon, in "Middlemarch," was drawn from the character of Mr. Lewes. Mrs. Stowe took it so entirely for granted in her letters that it was impossible to dispossess her mind of the illusion. Evidently it was the source of much harmless household amusement at St. John's Wood. I find in Mrs. Stowe's letters some pleasant allusions to this correspondence. She writes: "We were all full of George Eliot when your note came, as I had received a beautiful letter from her in answer to one I wrote from Florida. She is a noble, true woman; and if anybody does n't see it, so much the worse for *them*, and not her." In a note written about that time Mrs. Stowe says she is "coming to Boston, and will bring George Eliot's letters with her that we may read them together;" but that pleasant plan was only one of the imagination, and was never carried out.

Her own letter to Mrs. Lewes, written from Florida in March, 1876, may be considered one of the most beautiful and interesting pieces of writing she ever achieved.

Although this letter is accessible in a life of Mrs. Stowe published by her son during her life, I am tempted to reproduce a portion of it in these pages for those who have not seen it elsewhere. It is a positive loss to cut such a letter, but it covers too much space to quote in full. She dates in

ORANGE BLOSSOM TIME, MANDARIN,
March 18, 1876.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I always think of you when the orange-trees are in blossom; just now they are fuller than ever, and so many bees are filling the branches that the air is full of a sort of still murmur. And now I am beginning to hear from you every month in "Harper's." It is as good as a letter. "Daniel Deronda" has succeeded in awaking in my somewhat worn-out mind an interest. So many stories are tramping over one's mind in every modern magazine nowadays that one is macadamized, so to speak. It takes something unusual to make a sensation. This does excite and interest me, as I wait for each number with eagerness. I wish I could endow you with our long winter weather, — not winter, except such as you find in Sicily. We live here from November to June, and my husband sits outdoors on

the veranda and reads all day. We emigrate in solid family; my two dear daughters, husband, self, and servants come together to spend the winter here, and so together to our Northern home in summer. My twin daughters relieve me from all domestic care; they are lively, vivacious, with a real genius for practical life. . . . It was very sweet and kind of you to write what you did last. I suppose it is so long ago you may have forgotten, but it was a word of tenderness and sympathy about my brother's trial; it was womanly, tender, and sweet, such as at heart you are. After all, my love of you is greater than my admiration, for I think it more and better to be really a woman worth loving than to have read Greek and German and written books. . . .

It seems now but a little while since my brother Henry and I were two young people together. He was my two years junior, and nearest companion out of seven brothers and three sisters. I taught him drawing and heard his Latin lessons, for you know a girl becomes mature and womanly long before a boy. . . . Then he married and lived a missionary life in the new West, all with a joyousness, an enthusiasm, a chivalry, which made life bright and vigorous to us both. Then in time he was called to Brooklyn. . . . I well remember one snowy night his riding till midnight to see me, and then our talking, till near morning, what

we could do to make headway against the horrid cruelties that were being practiced against the defenseless blacks. My husband was then away lecturing, and my heart was burning itself out in indignation and anguish. Henry told me he meant to fight that battle in New York ; that he would have a church that would stand by him to resist the tyrannic dictation of Southern slaveholders. I said : "I, too, have begun to do something ; I have begun a story, trying to set forth the sufferings and wrongs of the slaves." "That 's right, Hattie," he said ; "finish it, and I will scatter it thick as the leaves of Vallombrosa," — and so came "Uncle Tom," and Plymouth Church became a stronghold. . . .

And when all was over, it was he and Lloyd Garrison who were sent by government once more to raise our national flag on Fort Sumter. You must see that a man does not so energize without making many enemies. Half of our Union has been defeated . . . and there are those who never saw our faces that to this hour hate him and me. Then he has been a progressive in theology. He has been a student of Huxley and Spencer and Darwin, — enough to alarm the old school, — and yet remained so ardent a supernaturalist as equally to repel the radical destructionists in religion. He and I are Christ-worshipers, adoring Him as the Image in the Invisible God and all that comes from be-

lieving this. Then he has been a reformer, an advocate of universal suffrage and woman's rights, yet not radical enough to please that reform party who stand where the socialists of France do, and are for tearing up all creation generally. Lastly, he had had the misfortune of a popularity which is perfectly phenomenal. I cannot give you any idea of the love, worship, idolatry, with which he has been overwhelmed. He has something magnetic about him, that makes everybody crave his society, that makes men follow and worship him. . . .

My brother is hopelessly generous and confiding. His inability to believe evil is something incredible, and so has come all this suffering. . . . But you see why I have not written. This has drawn on my life, — my heart's blood. He is myself; I know you are the kind of woman to understand me when I say I felt a blow at him more than at myself. I who know his purity, honor, delicacy, know that he has been from childhood of an ideal purity, — who reverenced his conscience as his king, whose glory was redressing human wrong, who spoke no slander, no, nor listened to it. . . . My brother's power to console is something peculiar and wonderful. I have seen him at deathbeds and funerals, where it would seem as if hope herself must be dumb, bring down the very peace of Heaven and change despair to trust. He has not had less power in his own adversity. . . .

Well, dear, pardon me for this outpour. I loved you, — I love you, — and therefore wanted you to know just what I felt. . . .

This friendship was one that greatly enlisted Mrs. Stowe's sympathies and enriched her life. Her interest in any woman who was supporting herself, and especially in any one who found a daily taskmaster in the pen, and above all when, as in this case, the woman was one possessed of great moral aspiration half paralyzed in its action because she found herself in an anomalous and (to the world in general) utterly incomprehensible position, made such a woman like a magnet to Mrs. Stowe. She inherited from her father a faith in the divine power of sympathy, which only waxed greater with years and experience. Wherever she found a fellow-mortal suffering trouble or dishonor, in spite of hindrance her feet were turned that way. The genius of George Eliot and the contrasting elements of her life and character drew Mrs. Stowe to her side in sisterly solicitude. Her attitude, her sweetness, her sincerity, could not fail to win the heart of George Eliot. They became loving friends.

It was the same inborn sense of fraternity which led her, when a child, on hearing of the death of Lord Byron, to go out into the fields and fling herself, weeping, on the mounded hay, where she might pray alone for his forgive-

ness and salvation. It is wonderful to observe the influence of Byron upon that generation. It is on record that when Tennyson, a boy of fifteen, heard some one say, "Byron is dead," he thought the whole world at an end. "I thought," he said one day, "everything was over and finished for every one; that nothing else mattered. I remember that I went out alone and carved 'Byron is dead' into the sandstone."

From this time forward Mrs. Stowe was chiefly bound up in her life and labors at the South. In 1870, speaking of some literary work she was proposing to herself, she said: "I am writing as a pure recreative movement of mind, to divert myself from the stormy, unrestful present. . . . I am being *châtelaine* of a Florida farm. I have on my mind the creation of a town on the banks of the St. John. The three years since we came this side of the river have called into life and growth a thousand peach-trees, a thousand orange-trees, about five hundred lemons, and seven or eight hundred grapevines. A peach orchard, a vineyard, a lemon grove, will carry my name to posterity. I am founding a place which, thirty or forty years hence, will be called the old Stowe place. . . . You can have no idea of this queer country, this sort of strange, sandy, half-tropical dreamland, unless you come to it. Here I sit with open windows, the orange buds just open-

ing and filling the air with sweetness, the hens drowsily cackling, the men planting in the field, and callas and wild roses blossoming out of doors. We keep a little fire morning and night. We are flooded with birds; and by the bye, it is St. Valentine's Day. . . . I think a uniform edition of Dr. Holmes's works would be a good thing. Next to Hawthorne he is our most exquisite writer, and in many passages he goes far beyond him. What is the dear Doctor doing? If you know any book good to inspire dreams and visions, put it into my box. My husband chews endlessly a German cud. I must have English. Has the French book on Spiritualism come yet? If it has, put it in. . . . I wish I could give you a plateful of our oranges. . . . We had seventy-five thousand of these same on our trees this year, and if you will start off quick, they are not all picked yet. Florida wants one thing, — grass. If it had grass, it would be paradise. But nobody knows what grass is till they try to do without it."

Three months later she wrote: "I hate to leave my calm isle of Patmos, where the world is not, and I have such quiet long hours for writing. Emerson could *insulate* himself here and keep his electricity. Hawthorne ought to have lived in an orange grove in Florida. . . . You have no idea how small you all look, you folks in the world, from this distance. All your

fusses and your fumings, your red-hot hurrying newspapers, your clamor of rival magazines, — why, we see it as we see steamboats fifteen miles off, a mere speck and smoke."

Again she writes: "You ought to see us riding out in our mule-cart. Poor 'Fly!' the last of pea-time, who looks like an animated hair-trunk and the wagon and harness to match! It is too funny, but we enjoy it hugely. There are now in our solitude five Northern families, and we manage to have quite pleasant society.

"But think of our church and school-house being burned down just as we were ready to do something with it. I feel it most for the colored people, who were so anxious to have their school and now have no place to have it in. We have all been trying to raise what we can for a new building and intend to get one up by March.

"If I were North now I would try giving some readings for this and perhaps raise something."

It was a strange contrast and one at variance with her natural taste, which brought her before the public as a reader of her own stories in the autumn and winter of 1872–73. She was no longer able to venture on the effort of a long story, and yet it was manifestly unwise for her to forego the income which was extended to her through this channel. She wrote: "I have had a very urgent business letter, saying that

the lyceums of different towns were making up their engagements, and that if I were going into it I must make my engagements now. It seems to me that I cannot do this. The thing will depend so much on my health and ability to do. You know I could not go round in cold weather. . . . I feel entirely uncertain, and, as the Yankees say, 'did n't know what to do nor to don't.' My state in regard to it may be described by the phrase 'Kind o' love to — hate to — wish I did n't — want ter.' I suppose the result will be I shall not work into their lecture system."

In April she wrote from Mandarin: "I am painting a *Magnolia grandiflora*, which I will show you. . . . I am appalled by finding myself booked to read. But I am getting well and strong, and trust to be equal to the emergency. But I shrink from Tremont Temple, and —— does not think I can fill it. On the whole I should like to begin in Boston." And in August she said: "I am to begin in Boston in September. . . . It seems to me that is a little too early for Boston, is n't it? Will there be anybody in town then? I don't know as it 's my business, which is simply to speak my piece and take my money."

Her first reading actually took place in Springfield, not Boston, and the next day she unexpectedly arrived at our cottage at Manchester-by-the-Sea. She had read the previous

evening in a large public hall, had risen at five o'clock that morning, and found her way to us. Her next readings were given in Boston, the first, in the afternoon, at the Tremont Temple. She was conscious that her effort at Springfield had not been altogether successful, — she had not held her large audience; and she was determined to put the whole force of her nature into this afternoon reading at the Tremont Temple. She called me into her bedroom, where she stood before the mirror, with her short gray hair, which usually lay in soft curls around her brow, brushed erect and standing stiffly. "Look here, my dear," she said; "now I am exactly like my father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, when he was going to preach," and she held up her forefinger warningly. It was easy to see that the spirit of the old preacher was revived in her veins, and the afternoon would show something of his power. An hour later, when I sat with her in the anteroom waiting for the moment of her appearance to arrive, I could feel the power surging up within her. I knew she was armed for a good fight.

That reading was a great success. She was alive in every fibre of her being: she was to read portions of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to men, women, and children many of whom had taken no part in the crisis which inspired it, and she determined to effect the difficult task of making them feel as well as hear. With her presence

and inspiration they could not fail to understand what her words had signified to the generation that had passed through the struggle of our war. When her voice was not sufficient to make the audience hear, the people rose from their seats and crowded round her, standing gladly, that no word might be lost. It was the last leap of the flame which had burned out a great wrong. From this period, although she continued to write, she lived chiefly for several winters in the retirement of the Florida orange grove, which she always enjoyed. Her sympathy was strong with the new impetus benevolent work in cities had received, and she helped it from her "grotto" in more ways than one. Sometimes she would write soothing or inspiriting letters, as the case might demand, to individuals.

The following note, written at the time of the Boston fire in 1872, will show how alive she was to the need of that period.

"I send inclosed one hundred dollars to the fund for the Firemen. I could wish it a hundred times as much, and then it would be inadequate to express how much I honor those brave, devoted men who put their own lives between Boston and mine. No soldiers that fell in battle for our common country ever deserved of us all greater honor than the noble men whose charred and blackened remains have been borne from the ruins of Boston; they are

worthy to be inscribed on imperishable monuments.

"I would that some such honorary memorial might commemorate their heroism."

Meanwhile, the comfort she drew in from the beauty of nature and the calm around her seemed yearly to nourish and renew her power of existence. Questions which were difficult to others were often solved to her mind by practical observation. It amused her to hear persons agitating the question as to where they should look to supply labor for the South. "Why," she remarked once, "there was a negro, one of those fearfully hot days in the spring, who was digging muck from a swamp just in front of our house, and carrying it in a wheelbarrow up a steep slope, where he dumped it down, and then went back for more. He kept this up when it was so hot that we thought either one of us would die to be five minutes in the sun. We carried a thermometer to the spot where he was working, to see how great the heat was, and it rose at once to one hundred and thirty-five degrees. The man, however, kept cheerfully at his work, and when he went to his dinner sat with the other negroes out in the white sand without a bit of shade. Afterward they all lay down for a nap in the same unsheltered locality. Toward evening, when the sun was sufficiently low to enable me to go out, I went to speak to this man. 'Martin,'

said I, 'you've had a warm day's work. How do you stand it? Why, I could n't endure such heat for five minutes.' 'Hoh! hoh! No, I s'pose you could n't. Ladies can't, missus.' 'But, Martin, are n't you very tired?' 'Bress your heart, no, missus.' So Martin goes home to his supper, and after supper will be found dancing all the evening on the wharf near by! After this, when people talk of bringing Germans and Swedes to do such work, I am much entertained."

Many were the pleasant descriptions of her home sent forth to tempt her friends away from the busy North. "Here is where we read books," she said in one of her letters, written in the month of March. "Up North nobody does, — they don't have time; so if —— will mail his book to Mandarin, I will 'read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.' We are having a carnival of flowers. I hope you read my 'Palmetto Leaves,' for then you will see all about us. . . . Our home is like a martin-box. . . . I cannot tell you the quaint odd peace we have here in living under the oak. 'Behold, she dwelleth under the oak at Mamre.' All that we want is friends, to whom we may say that solitude is sweet. We have some neighbors, however, who have made pretty places near us. Mr. Stowe keeps up a German class of three young ladies, with whom he is reading Faust for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time, and

in the evening I read aloud to a small party of the neighbors. We have made up our home as we went along, throwing out a chamber here and there, like twigs out of the old oak. . . . The orange blossoms have come like showers of pearl, and the yellow jessamine like golden fleeces, and the violets and the lilies, and azaleas. This is glorious, budding, blossoming spring, and we have days when merely to breathe and be is to be blessed. I love to have a day of mere existence. Life itself is a pleasure when the sun shines warm, and the lizards dart from all the shingles of the roof, and the birds sing in so many notes and tones the yard reverberates; and I sit and dream and am happy, and never want to go back North, nor do anything with the toiling, snarling world again. I do wish I could gather you both in my little nest."

She was like her father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, in many things. The scorching fire of the brain seemed to devour its essence, and she endured, as he did before her, some years of existence when the motive power almost ceased to act. She became "like a little child," wandering about, pleased with flowers, fresh air, the sound of a piano, or a voice singing hymns, but the busy, inspiring spirit was asleep.

Gradually she faded away, shrouded in this strange mystery, hovered over by the untiring

affection of her children, sweet and tender in her decadence, but "absent."

At the moment when this brief memorial was receiving a final revision before going to the press, the news reached me of the unloosing of the last threads of consciousness which bound Mrs. Stowe to this world.

The sweetness and patience of her waiting years can only be perfectly told by the daughters who hung over her. She knew her condition, but there was never a word of complaint, and so long as her husband lived she performed the office of nurse and attendant upon his lightest wishes as if she felt herself strong. Her near friends were sometimes invited to dine or to have supper with her at that period, but they could see even then how prostrated she became after the slightest mental effort. It was upon occasion of such a visit that she told me, with a twinkle of the eye, that "Mr. Stowe was sometimes inclined to be a little fretful during the long period of his illness, and said to her one day that he believed the Lord had forgotten him." "Oh, no, He has n't," she answered; "cheer up! your turn will come soon."

She was always fond of music, especially of the one kind she had known best; and the singing of hymns never failed to soothe her at the last; therefore when the little group stood round her open grave on a lovely July day and sang quite simply the hymns she loved, it seemed

in its simplicity and broken harmony a fitting farewell to the faded body she had already left so far behind.

A great spirit has performed its mission and has been released. The world moves on unconscious ; but the world's children have been blessed by her coming, and they who know and understand should praise God reverently in her going. "As a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves : so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." In the words of the prophet we can almost hear her glad cry : —

"My sword shall be bathed in heaven."

CELIA THAXTER

BORN JUNE, 1835; DIED AUGUST, 1894.

CELIA THAXTER

If it were ever intended that a desolate island in the deep sea should be inhabited by one solitary family, then indeed Celia Thaxter was the fitting daughter of such a house.

In her history of the group of islands, which she calls "Among the Isles of Shoals," she portrays, in a prose which for beauty and wealth of diction has few rivals, the unfolding of her own nature under influences of sky and sea and solitude and untrammeled freedom, such as have been almost unknown to civilized humanity in any age of the world. She speaks also of the effect produced, as she fancied, upon the minds of men by the eternal sound of the sea: a tendency to wear away the edge of human thought and perception. But this was far from being the case with regard to herself. Her eyesight was keener, her speech more distinct, the lines of her thoughts more clearly defined, her verse more strongly marked in its form, and the accuracy of her memory more to be relied upon than was the case with almost any one of her contemporaries. Her painting, too, upon porcelain possessed the same charac-

ter. Her knowledge of the flowers, and especially of the seaweeds, with which she decorated it, was so exact that she did not require the originals before her vision. They were painted upon her mind's eye, where every filament and every shade seemed to be recorded. These green "growing things" had been the beloved companions of her childhood, as they continued to be of her womanhood, and even to reproduce their forms in painting was a delight to her. The written descriptions of natural objects give her history a place among the pages which possess a perennial existence. While White's "Selborne," and the pictures of Bewick, and Thoreau's "Walden," and the "Autobiography of Richard Jefferies" endure, so long will "Among the Isles of Shoals" hold its place with all lovers of nature. She says in one place, "All the pictures over which I dream are set in this framework of the sea, that sparkled and sang, or frowned and threatened, in the ages that are gone as it does to-day."

The solitude of Celia Thaxter's childhood, which was not solitude, surrounded as she was with the love of a father and a mother, all tenderness, and brothers dear to her as her own life, developed in the child strange faculties. She was five years old when the family left Portsmouth, — old enough, given her inborn power of enjoyment of nature, to delight in the

free air and the wonderful sights around her. She gives in her book a pretty picture of the child watching the birds that flew against the lighthouse lantern, when they lived at White Island. The birds would strike it with such force as to kill themselves. "Many a May morning," she says, "have I wandered about the rock at the foot of the tower, mourning over a little apron brimful of sparrows, swallows, thrushes, robins, fire-winged blackbirds, many-colored warblers and flycatchers, beautifully clothed yellow-birds, nuthatches, catbirds, even the purple finch and scarlet tanager and golden oriole, and many more beside, — enough to break the heart of a small child to think of! Once a great eagle flew against the lantern and shivered the glass."

Her father seems to have been a man of awful energy of will. Some disappointment in his hope of a public career, it has been said, decided him to take the step of withdrawing himself forever from the world of the mainland, and this attitude he appears to have sustained unflinchingly to the end. Her mother, with a heart stayed as unflinchingly upon love and obedience, seems to have followed him without a murmur, leaving every dear association of the past as though it had not been. From this moment she became, not the slave, but the queen of her affections; and when she died, in 1877, the sun appeared to set upon her daughter's

life. On the morning after Mrs. Thaxter's sudden death, seventeen years later, a friend asked her eldest son where his mother was, with the intent to discover if she had been well enough to leave her room. "Oh," he replied, "her mother came in the night and took her away." This reply showed how deeply all who were near to Celia Thaxter were impressed with the fact that to see her mother again was one of the deepest desires of her heart.

The development wrought in her eager character by those early days of exceptional experience gives a new sense of what our poor humanity may achieve, left face to face with the vast powers of nature.

In speaking of the energy of Samuel Haley, one of the early settlers of the islands, she says he learned to live as independently as possible of his fellow-men; "for that is one of the first things a settler on the Isles of Shoals finds it necessary to learn." Her own lesson was learned perfectly. The sunrise was as familiar to her eyes as the sunset, and early and late the activity of her mind was rivaled by the ceaseless industry of her hands. She pays a tribute to the memory of Miss Peabody, of Newburyport, who went to Star Island in 1823 and "did wonders for the people during the three years of her stay. She taught the school, visited the families, and on Sundays read to such audiences as she could collect, took seven of the poor

female children to live with her at the parsonage, instructed all who would learn in the arts of carding, spinning, weaving, knitting, sewing, braiding mats, etc. Truly she remembered what 'Satan finds for idle hands to do,' and kept all her charges busy, and consequently happy. All honor to her memory! She was a wise and faithful servant. There is still an affectionate remembrance of her among the present inhabitants, whose mothers she helped out of their degradation into a better life."

If it was not in Celia Thaxter's nature to teach in this direct way herself, she did not fail to appreciate and to stimulate excellence of every kind in others. Appledore was too far away in winter from the village at Star Island for any regular or frequent communication between them. Even so late as in the month of May she records watching a little fleet beating up for shelter under the lee of Appledore to ride out a storm. "They were in continual peril. . . . It was not pleasant to watch them as the early twilight shut down over the vast weltering desolation of the sea, to see the slender masts waving helplessly from one side to another. . . . Some of the men had wives and children watching them from lighted windows at Star. What a fearful night for them! They could not tell from hour to hour, through the thick darkness, if yet the cables held; they could not

see till daybreak whether the sea had swallowed up their treasures. I wonder the wives were not white haired when the sun rose and showed them those little specks yet rolling in the breakers!" How clearly these scenes were photographed on the sensitive plate of her mind! She never forgot nor really lost sight of her island people. Her sympathy drew them to her as if they were her own, and the little colony of Norwegians was always especially dear to her. "How pathetic," she says, "the gathering of women on the headlands, when out of the sky swept the squall that sent the small boat staggering before it, and blinded the eyes, already drowned in tears, with sudden rain that hid sky and sea and boats from their eager gaze!"

What she was, what her sympathy was, to those people, no one can ever quite express. The deep devotion of their service to her brothers and to herself, through the long solitude of winter and the storm of summer visitors, alone could testify. Such service cannot be bought: it is the devotion born of affection and gratitude and admiration. Speaking of one of the young women who grew up under her eye, she often said: "What could I do in this world without Mine Burntssen? I hope she will be with me when I die." And there indeed, at the last, was Mine, to receive the latest word and to perform the few sad offices.

To tell of the services Mrs. Thaxter rendered to some of the more helpless people about her, in the dark season, when no assistance from the mainland could be hoped for, would make a long and noble story in itself. Her good sense made her an excellent doctor; the remedies she understood she was always on hand to apply at the right moment. Sometimes she was unexpectedly called to assist in the birth of a child, when knowledge and strength she was hardly aware of seemed to be suddenly developed. But the truth was she could do almost anything; and only those who knew her in these humbler human relations could understand how joyous she was in the exercise of such duties, or how well able to perform them. Writing to Mine from the Shoals once in March, she says: "This is the time to be here; this is what I enjoy! To wear my old clothes every day, grub in the ground, dig dandelions and eat them too, plant my seeds and watch them, fly on the tricycle, row in a boat, get into my dressing-gown right after tea, and make lovely rag rugs all the evening, and nobody to disturb us, — *this* is fun!" In the house and out of it she was capable of everything. How beautiful her skill was as a dressmaker, the exquisite lines in her own black or gray or white dresses testified to every one who ever saw her. She never wore any other colors, nor was anything like "trimming" ever seen about her; there were only

the fine, free outlines, and a white handkerchief folded carefully about her neck and shoulders.

In her young days it was the same, with a difference! She was slighter in figure then, and overflowing with laughter, the really beautiful but noisy laughter which died away as the repose of manner of later years fell upon her. I can remember her as I first saw her, with the seashells which she always wore then around her neck and wrists, and a gray poplin dress defining her lovely form. She talked simply and fearlessly, while her keen eyes took in everything around her; she paid the tribute of her instantaneous laughter to the wit of others, — never too eager to speak, and never unwilling. Her sense of beauty, not vanity, caused her to make the most of the good physical points she possessed; therefore, although she grew old early, the same general features of her appearance were preserved. She was almost too well known even to strangers, in these later years at the Shoals, to make it worth while to describe the white hair carefully put up to preserve the shape of the head, and the small silver crescent which she wore above her forehead; but her manner had become very quiet and tender, more and more affectionate to her friends, and appreciative of all men. One of those who knew her latterly wrote me: "Many of her letters show her boundless sympathy, her keen appreciation of the best in those whom she loved, and her

wonderful growth in beauty and roundness of character. And how delightful her enthusiasms were, — as pure and clear as those of a child! She was utterly unlike any one in the world, so that few people really understood her. But it seems to me that her trials softened and mellowed her, until she became like one of her own beautiful flowers, perfect in her full development; then in a night the petals fell, and she was gone."

The capabilities which were developed in her by the necessities of the situation, during her life at the Shoals in winter, were more various and remarkable than can be fitly told. The glimpses which we get in her letters of the many occupations show what energy she brought to bear upon the difficulties of the place.

In "Among the Isles of Shoals" she says: "After winter has fairly set in, the lonely dwellers at the Isles of Shoals find life quite as much as they can manage, being so entirely thrown upon their own resources that it requires all the philosophy at their disposal to answer the demand. . . . One goes to sleep in the muffled roar of the storm, and wakes to find it still raging with senseless fury. . . . The weather becomes of the first importance to the dwellers on the rock; the changes of the sky and sea, the flitting of the coasters to and fro, the visits of the sea-fowl, sunrise and sunset, the changing

moon, the northern lights, the constellations that wheel in splendor through the winter night, — all are noted with a love and careful scrutiny that is seldom given by people living in populous places. . . . For these things make our world: there are no lectures, operas, concerts, theatres, no music of any kind, except what the waves may whisper in rarely gentle moods; no galleries of wonders like the Natural History rooms, in which it is so fascinating to wander; no streets, shops, carriages; no postman, no neighbors, not a door-bell within the compass of the place! . . . The best balanced human mind is prone to lose its elasticity and stagnate, in this isolation. One learns immediately the value of work to keep one's wits clear, cheerful, and steady; just as much real work of the body as it can bear without weariness being always beneficent, but here indispensable. . . . No one can dream what a charm there is in taking care of pets, singing birds, plants, etc., with such advantages of solitude; how every leaf and bud and flower is pored over, and admired, and loved! A whole conservatory, flushed with azaleas and brilliant with forests of camellias and every precious exotic that blooms, could not impart so much delight as I have known a single rose to give, unfolding in the bleak bitterness of a day in February, when this side of the planet seemed to have arrived at its culmination of hopelessness, with the

Isles of Shoals the most hopeless spot upon its surface. One gets close to the heart of these things; they are almost as precious as Picciola to the prisoner, and yield a fresh and constant joy such as the pleasure-seeking inhabitants of cities could not find in their whole round of shifting diversions. With a bright and cheerful interior, open fires, books and pictures, windows full of thrifty blossoming plants and climbing vines, a family of singing birds, plenty of work, and a clear head and quiet conscience, it would go hard if one could not be happy even in such loneliness. Books, of course, are inestimable. Nowhere does one follow a play of Shakespeare's with greater zest, for it brings the whole world, which you need, about you; doubly precious the deep thoughts which wise men have given to help us, doubly sweet the songs of all the poets; for nothing comes between to distract you."

It was not extraordinary that the joy of human intercourse, after such estrangement, became a rapture to so loving a nature as Celia Laighton's; nor that, very early, before the period of fully ripened womanhood, she should have been borne away from her island by a husband, a man of birth and education, who went to preach to the wild fisher folk on the adjacent island called Star.

The exuberant joy of her unformed maidenhood, with its power of self-direction, attracted

the reserved, intellectual nature of Mr. Thaxter. He could not dream that this careless, happy creature possessed the strength and sweep of wing which belonged to her own sea-gull. In good hope of teaching and developing her, of adding much in which she was uninstructed to the wisdom which the influences of nature and the natural affections had bred in her, he carried his wife to a quiet inland home, where three children were very soon born to them. Under the circumstances, it was not extraordinary that his ideas of education were not altogether successfully applied; she required more strength than she could summon, more adaptability than many a grown woman could have found, to face the situation, and life became difficult and full of problems to them both. Their natures were strongly contrasted, but perhaps not too strongly to complement each other, if he had fallen in love with her as a woman, and not as a child. His retiring, scholarly nature and habits drew him away from the world; her overflowing, sun-loving being, like a solar system in itself, reached out on every side, rejoicing in all created things.

Her introduction to the world of letters was by means of her first poem, "Land-Locked," which, by the hand of a friend, was brought to the notice of James Russell Lowell, at that time editor of the "Atlantic." He printed it at once, without exchanging a word with the

author. She knew nothing about it until the magazine was laid before her. This recognition of her talent was a delight indeed, and it was one of the happiest incidents in a life which was already overclouded with difficulties and sorrow. It will not be out of place to reprint this poem here, because it must assure every reader of the pure poetic gift which was in her. In form, in movement, and in thought it is as beautiful as her latest work.

LAND-LOCKED

Black lie the hills; swiftly doth daylight flee;
And, catching gleams of sunset's dying smile,
Through the dusk land for many a changing mile
The river runneth softly to the sea.

O happy river, could I follow thee!
O yearning heart, that never can be still!
O wistful eyes, that watch the steadfast hill,
Longing for level line of solemn sea!

Have patience; here are flowers and songs of birds,
Beauty and fragrance, wealth of sound and sight,
All summer's glory thine from morn till night,
And life too full of joy for uttered words.

Neither am I ungrateful; but I dream
Deliciously how twilight falls to-night
Over the glimmering water, how the light
Dies blissfully away, until I seem

To feel the wind, sea-scented, on my cheek,
To catch the sound of dusky, flapping sail,
And dip of oars, and voices on the gale
Afar off, calling low, — my name they speak!

O Earth! thy summer song of joy may soar
Ringing to heaven in triumph. I but crave
The sad, caressing murmur of the wave
That breaks in tender music on the shore.

With the growth of Mrs. Thaxter's children and the death of her father, the love and duty she owed her mother caused her to return in winter to the Shoals, although a portion of every summer was passed there. This was her husband's wish; his sense of loyalty to age and his deep attachment to his own parents made such a step appear necessary to him under the circumstances.

But she had already tasted of the tree of knowledge, and the world outside beckoned to her with as fascinating a face as it ever presented to any human creature. It was during one of these returning visits to the Shoals that much of the delightful book from which I have quoted was written; a period when she had already learned something of the charms of society, — sufficient to accentuate her appreciation of her own past, and to rejoice in what a larger life now held in store for her.

Lectures, operas, concerts, theatres, pictures, music above all, — what were they not to her! Did artists ever before find such an eye and such an ear? She brought to them a spirit prepared for harmony, but utterly ignorant of the science of painting or music until the light of art suddenly broke upon her womanhood.

Of what this new world was to her we find some hint, of course, in her letters; but no human lips, not even her own exuberant power of expression, could ever say how her existence was enriched and made beautiful through music. Artists who sang to her, or those who rehearsed the finest music on the piano or violin or flute, or those who brought their pictures and put them before her while she listened, — they alone, in a measure, understood what these things signified, and how she was lifted quite away by them from the ordinary level of life. They were inspired to do for her what they could seldom do for any other creature; and her generous response, overflowing, almost extravagant in expression, was never half enough to begin to tell the new life they brought to her. The following lines from a sonnet addressed to the tenor singer William J. Winch, a singer who has given much pleasure to many persons by his beautiful voice, will convey some idea of the deep feeling which his ardent rendering of great songs stirred in her: —

> "Carry us captive, thou with the strong heart
> And the clear head, and nature sweet and sound!
> Most willing captives we to thy great art.
> . . . . . .
> Sing, and we ask no greater joy than this,
> Only to listen, thrilling to the song,
> . . . . . .
> Borne skyward where the wingèd hosts rejoice."

Mrs. Thaxter found herself, as the years went

on, the centre of a company who rather selected themselves than were selected from the vast number of persons who frequented her brothers' "house of entertainment" at the islands. Her "parlor," as it was called, was a *milieu* quite as interesting as any of the "salons" of the past. Her pronounced individuality forbade the intrusion even of a fancy of comparison with anything else, and equally forbade the possibility of rivalry. There was only one thought in the mind of the frequenters of her parlor, — that of gratitude for the pleasure and opportunity she gave them, and a genuine wish to please her and to become her friends. She possessed the keen instincts of a child with regard to people. If they were unlovable to her, if they were for any reason unsympathetic, nothing could bring her to overcome her dislike. She was in this particular more like some wild thing than a creature of the nineteenth century; indeed, one of her marked traits was a curious intractability of nature. I believe that no worldly motive ever influenced her relation with any human creature. Of course these native qualities made her more ardently devoted in her friendships; but it went hardly with her to ingratiate those persons for whom she felt a natural repulsion, or even sometimes to be gentle with them. Later in life she learned to call no man "common or unclean;" but coming into the world, as she did, full grown, like Mi-

herva in the legend, with keen eyes, and every sense alive to discern pretension, untruth, ungodliness in guise of the church, and all the uncleanness of the earth, these things were as much a surprise to her as it was, on the other hand, to find the wondrous world of art and the lives of the saints. Perhaps no large social success was ever achieved upon such unworldly conditions; she swung as free as possible of the world of society and its opinions, forming a centre of her own, built up on the sure foundations of love and loyalty. She saw as much as any woman of the time of large numbers of people, and she was able to give them the best kind of social enjoyment: music, pictures, poetry, and conversation; the latter sometimes poor and sometimes good, according to the drift which swept through her beautiful room. Mrs. Thaxter was generous in giving invitations to her parlor, but to its frequenters she said, "If people do not enjoy what they find, they must go their way; my work and the music will not cease." The study of nature and art was always going forward either on or around her work-table. The keynote of conversation was struck there for those who were able to hear it. We were reminded of William Blake's verse: —

> "I give you the end of a golden string,
> Only wind it into a ball,
> It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
> Built in Jerusalem wall."

Here it was that Whittier could be heard at his best, sympathetic, stimulating, uplifting, as he alone could be, and yet as he, with his Quaker training to silence, was so seldom moved to prove himself. Here he would sit near her hour after hour; sometimes mending her æolian harp while they talked together, sometimes reading aloud to the assembled company. Here was Rose Lamb, artist and dear friend; and here Mrs. Mary Hemenway was a most beloved presence, with her eager enthusiasm for reform, yet with a modesty of bearing which made young and old press to her side. She loved Celia Thaxter, who in her turn was deeply and reverently attached to Mrs. Hemenway.

The early affection of both Mr. Thaxter and his wife for William Morris Hunt grew to be the love of a lifetime. Hunt's grace, versatility, and charm, not to speak of his undoubted genius, exerted their combined fascination over these appreciative friends in common with the rest of his art-loving contemporaries; but to these two, each in their several ways, Hunt felt himself equally attracted, and the last sad summer of his life he gladly turned to Celia Thaxter in her island home as a sure refuge in time of trouble. It was she who watched him day by day, listening to his words, which came clothed with a kind of inspiration. "Whatever genius may be," said Tom Appleton, "we all feel that William Hunt had it. His going is

the extinction of a great light ; a fervent hand is cold ; and the warmth which glowed through so many friends and disciples is like a trodden ember, extinguished." It was Celia Thaxter's hurrying footsteps which traced her friend to the spot where, in extreme weakness, he fell in death. She wrote, "It was that pretty lake where my wild roses had been blooming all summer, and where the birds dipped and sang at sunrise."

Her gratitude to the men and women who brought music to her door knew no limit ; it was strong, deep, and unforgetting. "What can I ever do for them," she would say, "when I remember the joy they bring me!"

Julius Eichberg was one of the earliest friends who ministered in this way to her happiness. Her letters of the time overflow with the descriptions of programmes for the day, when Mr. Paine and Mr. Eichberg would play, together or alone, during long mornings and afternoons. "I am lost in bliss," she wrote ; "every morning, afternoon, and evening, Beethoven! I am emerging out of all my clouds by help of it ; it is divine!"

And again, writing of Mr. Paine in his own house, she said : "I am in the midst of the awful and thrilling music of the Œdipus Tyrannus, and it curdles my blood ; we are all steeped in it, for J. K. P. goes on and on composing it all the time, and the tremendous chords thrill the very timbers of the house. It is *most* interesting!"

Of Arthur Whiting, too, and his wife, whose musical gifts she placed among the first, she frequently wrote and spoke with loving appreciation. These friendships were a never failing source of gladness to her.

Later in life came Mr. William Mason, who was the chief minister to her joy in music, her enlightener, her consoler, to the end. Those who loved her best must always give him the tribute of their admiration and grateful regard. Mr. Mason must have known her keen gratitude, for who understood better than he the feeling by which she was lifted away from the things of this world by the power of music!

"The dignity of labor" is a phrase we have often heard repeated in modern life, but it was one unnecessary to be spoken by Celia Thaxter. It may easily be said of her that one of the finest lessons she unconsciously taught was not only the value of labor, but the joy of doing things well. The necessities of her position, as I have already indicated, demanded a great deal, but she responded to the need with a readiness and generosity great enough to extort admiration from those who knew her. How much she contributed to the comfort of the lives of those she loved at the Shoals we have endeavored to show; how beautiful her garden was there, in the summer, all the world could see; but at one period there was also a farm at Kittery Point, to be made beautiful and com-

fortable by her industry, where one of her sons still lives; and a *pied à terre* in Boston or in Portsmouth, whither she came in the winter with her eldest son, who was especially dependent upon her love and care: and all these changes demanded much of her time and strength.

She was certainly one of the busiest women in the world. Writing from Kittery Point September 6, 1880, she says: "It is divinely lovely here, and the house is charming. I have brought a servant over from the hotel, and it is a blessing to be able to make them all comfortable; to set them down in the charming dining-room overlooking the smooth, curved crescent of sandy beach, with the long rollers breaking white, and the shoals looming on the far sea-line. . . . But oh, how tired we all get! I shall be quite ready for my rest!"

This note gives a picture of her life. She was always seeking to make a bright spot around her; to give of herself in some way. There is a bit in her book which illustrates this instinct. The incident occurred during a long, dreary storm at the Shoals. Two men had come in a boat asking for help. "A little child had died at Star Island, and they could not sail to the mainland, and had no means to construct a coffin among themselves. All day I watched the making of that little chrysalis; and at night the last nail was driven in, and it lay across a

bench, in the midst of the litter of the workshop, and a curious stillness seemed to emanate from the senseless boards. I went back to the house and gathered a handful of scarlet geranium, and returned with it through the rain. The brilliant blossoms were sprinkled with glittering drops. I laid them in the little coffin, while the wind wailed so sorrowfully outside, and the rain poured against the windows. Two men came through the mist and storm, and one swung the light little shell to his shoulder, and they carried it away, and the gathering darkness shut down and hid them as they tossed among the waves. I never saw the little girl, but where they buried her I know; the lighthouse shines close by, and every night the quiet, constant ray steals to her grave and softly touches it, as if to say, with a caress, 'Sleep well! Be thankful you are spared so much that I see humanity endure, fixed here forever where I stand.'"

We have seen the profound love she felt for, and the companionship she found in, nature and natural objects; but combined with these sentiments, or developed simply by her love to speak more directly, was a very uncommon power of observation. This power grew day by day, and the delightful correspondence which existed between Bradford Torrey and herself, although they had never met face to face, bears witness to her constant mental record and

memory respecting the habits of birds and woodland manners. Every year we find her longing for larger knowledge; books and men of science attracted her; and if her life had been less intensely laborious, in order to make those who belonged to her comfortable and happy, what might she not have achieved! Her nature was replete with boundless possibilities, and we find ourselves asking the old, old question, Must the artist forever crush the wings by which he flies against such terrible limitations? — a question never to be answered in this world.

Her observations began with her earliest breath at the islands. "I remember," she says, "in the spring, kneeling on the ground to seek the first blades of grass that pricked through the soil, and bringing them into the house to study and wonder over. Better than a shopful of toys they were to me! Whence came their color? How did they draw their sweet, refreshing tint from the brown earth, or the limpid air, or the white light? Chemistry was not at hand to answer me, and all her wisdom would not have dispelled the wonder. Later, the little scarlet pimpernel charmed me. It seemed more than a flower; it was like a human thing. I knew it by its homely name of 'poor man's weather glass.' It was so much wiser than I; for when the sky was yet without a cloud, softly it clasped its small red petals

together, folding its golden heart in safety from the shower that was sure to come. How could it know so much?"

Whatever sorrows life brought to her, and they were many and of the heaviest, this exquisite enjoyment of nature, the tender love and care for every created thing within her reach, always stayed her heart. To see her lift a flower in her fingers, — fingers which gave one a sense of supporting everything which she touched, expressive, too, of fineness in every fibre, although strong and worn with labor, — to see her handle these wonderful creatures which she worshiped, was something not to be forgotten. The lines of Keats, —

> "Open afresh your rounds of starry folds,
> Ye ardent marigolds!"

were probably oftener flitting through her mind or from her lips than through the mind or from the lips of any since Keats wrote them. She remembered that he said he thought his "intensest pleasure in life had been to watch the growth of flowers," but she was sure he never felt their beauty more devoutly "than the little half-savage being who knelt, like a fire-worshiper, to watch the unfolding of those golden disks."

The time came at last, as it comes to every human being, for asking the reason of the faith that was in her. It was difficult for her to re-

ply. Her heart had often questioned whether she believed, and what; and yet, as she has said, she could not keep her faith out of her poems if she would. We find the following passage in "Among the Isles of Shoals," which throws a light beyond that of her own lantern.

"When the boat was out late," she says, "in soft, moonless summer nights, I used to light a lantern, and going down to the water's edge take my station between the timbers of the slip, and with the lantern at my feet sit waiting in the darkness, quite content, knowing my little star was watched for, and that the safety of the boat depended in a great measure upon it. . . . I felt so much a part of the Lord's universe, I was no more afraid of the dark than the waves or winds; but I was glad to hear at last the creaking of the mast and the rattling of the rowlocks as the boat approached."

"A part of the Lord's universe," — that Celia Thaxter always felt herself to be, and for many years she was impatient of other teaching than what nature brought to her. As life went on, and the mingled mysteries of human pain and grief were unfolded, she longed for a closer knowledge. At first she sought it everywhere, and patiently, save in or through the churches; with them she was long *im*patient. At last, after ardent search through the religious books and by means of the teachers of

the Orient, the Bible was born anew for her, and the New Testament became her stay and refreshment. At this period she wrote to her friend, Mrs. H. M. Rogers: "K. and I read the Bhagavad Gîtâ every day of our lives, and when we get to the end we begin again! It is a great thing to keep one's mind full of it, permeated as it were; and I think Mohini's own words are a great help and inspiration everywhere, all through it as well as in the beautiful introduction. I have written out clearly on the margin of my copy every text which he has quoted from the Scriptures, and find it most interesting. 'Truth is one.'"

Nothing was ever "born anew" in Celia Thaxter which she did not strive to share with others. She could keep nothing but secrets to herself. Joys, experiences of every kind, sorrows and misfortunes, except when they could darken the lives of others, were all brought open handed and open hearted, to those she loved. Her generosity knew no limits.

There is a description by her of the flood which swept over her being, and seemed to carry her away from the earth, when she once saw the great glory of the Lord in a rainbow at the island. She hid her face from the wonder; it was more than she could bear. "I felt then," she said, "how I longed to speak these things which made life so sweet, — to speak the wind, the cloud, the bird's flight, the sea's

murmur, — and ever the wish grew;" and so it was she became, growing from and with this wish, a poet the world will remember. Dr. Holmes said once in conversation that he thought the value of a poet to the world was not so much the pleasure that this or that poem might give to certain readers, or even perchance to posterity, as the fact that a poet was known to be one who was sometimes rapt out of himself into the region of the Divine; that the spirit had descended upon him and taught him what he should speak.

This is especially true of Celia Thaxter, whose life was divorced from worldliness, while it was instinct with the keenest enjoyment of life and of God's world. She liked to read her poems aloud when people asked for them; and if there was ever a genuine reputation from doing a thing well, such a reputation was hers. From the first person who heard her the wish began to spread, until, summer after summer, in her parlor, listeners would gather if she would promise to read to them. Night after night she has held her sway, with tears and smiles from her responsive little audiences, which seemed to gain new courage and light from what she gave them. Her unspeakably interesting nature was always betraying itself and shining out between the lines. Occasionally she yielded to the urgent claims brought to bear upon her by her friend Mrs. Johnson,

of the Woman's Prison, and would go to read to the sad-eyed audience at Sherborn. Even those hearts dulled by wrong and misery awakened at the sound of her voice. It was not altogether this or that verse or ballad that made the tears flow, or brought a laugh from her hearers; it was the deep sympathy which she carried in her heart and which poured out in her voice; a hope, too, for them, and for what they might yet become. She could not go frequently, — she was too deeply laden with responsibilities nearer home; but it was always a holiday when she was known to be coming, and a season of light-heartedness to Mrs. Johnson as well as to the prisoners.

It is a strange fallacy that a poet may not read his own verses well. Who besides the writer should comprehend every shade of meaning which made the cloud or sunshine of his poem? Mrs. Thaxter certainly read her own verse with a fullness of suggestion which no other reader could have given it; and her voice was sufficient, too, although not loud or striking, to fill and satisfy the ear of the listener. But at the risk of repetition we recall that it was her own generous, beautiful nature, unlike that of any other, which made her reading helpful to all who heard her. She speaks somewhere of the birds on her island as "so tame, knowing how well they are beloved, that they gather on the window-sills, twittering and flut-

tering, gay and graceful, turning their heads this way and that, eying you askance without a trace of fear." And so it was with the human beings who came to know her. They were attracted, they came near, they flew under her protection, and were not disappointed of their rest.

Four years before Mrs. Thaxter left this world, when she was still only fifty-five years old, she was stricken with a shaft of death. Her overworked body was prostrated in sudden agony, and she, well, young, vigorous beyond the ordinary lot of mortals, found herself weak and unable to rise. "I do so hate figuring as an interesting invalid," she wrote. "Perhaps I have been doing too much, getting settled. But oh, I used to be able to do *any*thing! Where is my old energy and vigor and power gone! It should not ebb away quite so soon!" She recovered her wonted tone and sufficient strength for every-day needs, and still found "life so interesting." But her keen observation had been brought to bear upon her own condition, and she suspected that she might flit away from us quickly some day.

Except for one who was especially dependent upon her she was quite ready. The surprises of this life were so wonderful, it was easy for her to believe in the surprises of the unseen; but her letters were full as usual of the things which feed the springs of joy around us in this

world. One summer it was the first volume of poems of Richard Watson Gilder which gave her great happiness. She talked of them, recited them, sent them to her friends, and finally wrote to Mr. Gilder himself. Since her death he has said, "I never saw Mrs. Thaxter but once, and that lately; but her immediate and surprising and continuous appreciation and encouragement I can never forget." How many other contemporaneous writers and artists could say the same!

The transparent simplicity of her character and manners, her love and capacity for labor, were combined with equal capacities for enjoying the complex in others and a pure appetite for pleasure. It would be impossible to find a more childlike power of enjoyment.

A perfect happiness came to her, during the last eight years of her life, with the birth of her grandchildren. The little boy who surprised her into bliss one day by crying out "I 'dore you, I 'dore you, granna! I love you every breff!" was the creature perhaps dearest to her heart; but she loved them all, and talked and wrote of them with abandonment of rejoicing. Writing to her friend Mrs. Rogers, she says: "Little E. stayed with his 'granna,' who worships the ground he walks on, and counted every beat of his quick-fluttering little heart. Oh, I never meant, in my old age, to become subject to the thrall of a love like this; it is

almost dreadful, so absorbing, so stirring down to the deeps. For the tiny creature is so old and wise and sweet, and so fascinating in his sturdy common sense and clear intelligence; and his affection for me is a wonderful, exquisite thing, the sweetest flower that has bloomed for me in all my life through."

Her enjoyment of art could not fade nor lose its keenness. Her life had been shut, as we have seen, into very narrow limits. She never had seen the city of New York, and life outside the circle we have described was an unknown world to her. She went to Europe once with her eldest brother, when he was ill, for three months, and she has left in her letters some striking descriptions of what she saw there; but her days were closely bounded by the necessities we have suggested. Nevertheless the great world of art was more to Celia Thaxter than to others; perhaps for the very reason that her mind was open and unjaded. Her rapture over the great players from England; her absolute agony, after seeing "The Cup" played by them in London, lest she could never, never tell the happiness it was to her, with Tennyson's words on her own tongue, as it were, to follow Miss Terry's perfect enunciation of the lines, — these enjoyments, true pleasures as indeed they are, did not lose their power over her.

Gilbert and Sullivan, too, could not have

found a more amused admirer. "Pinafore" never grew stale for her, and her brothers yielded to her fancy, or pleased it, by naming their little steamer Pinafore. She went to the theatre again and again to see this, and all the succeeding comedies by the same hands. She never seemed to weary of their fun.

But the poets were her great fountain of refreshment; "Siloa's brook" was her chief resort. Tennyson was her chosen master, and there were few of his lines she did not know by heart. Her feeling for nature was satisfied by the incomparable verses in which he portrays the divine light shining behind the life of natural things. How often have we heard her murmuring to herself, —

"The wind sounds like a silver wire,"

or,

"To watch the emerald-colored water falling,"

or,

"Black as ash-buds on the front of March."

Whatever it might be she was observing, there was some line of this great interpreter of nature ready to make the moment melodious. Shakespeare's sonnets were also her close companions; indeed, she seized and retained a cloud of beautiful things in her trustworthy memory. They fed and cheered her on her singing way.

In the quiet loveliness of early summer, and before the tide of humanity swept down upon Appledore, she went for the last time, in June,

1894, with a small company of intimate friends, to revisit the different islands and the well-known haunts most dear to her. The days were still and sweet, and she lingered lovingly over the old places, telling the local incidents which occurred to her, and touching the whole with a fresh light. Perhaps she knew that it was a farewell; but if it had been revealed to her, she could not have been more tender and loving in her spirit to the life around her.

How suddenly it seemed at last that her days with us were ended! She had been listening to music, had been reading to her little company, had been delighting in one of Appleton Brown's new pictures, and then she laid her down to sleep for the last time, and flitted away from her mortality.

The burial was at her island, on a quiet afternoon in the late summer. Her parlor, in which the body lay, was again made radiant, after her own custom, with the flowers from her garden, and a bed of sweet bay was prepared by her friends Appleton Brown and Childe Hassam, on which her form was laid.

William Mason once more played the music from Schumann which she chiefly loved, and an old friend, James De Normandie, paid a brief tribute of affection, spoken for all those who surrounded her. She was borne by her brothers and those nearest to her up to the silent spot where her body was left.

The day was still and soft, and the veiled sun was declining as the solemn procession, bearing flowers, followed to the sacred place. At a respectful distance above stood a wide ring of interested observers, but only those who knew her and loved her best drew near. After all was done, and the body was at rest upon the fragrant bed prepared for it, the young flower-bearers brought their burdens to cover her. The bright, tear-stained faces of those who held up their arms full of flowers to be heaped upon the spot until it became a mound of blossoms, allied the scene, in beauty and simplicity, to the solemn rites of antiquity.

It was indeed a poet's burial, but it was far more than that : it was the celebration of the passing of a large and beneficent soul.

WHITTIER

NOTES OF HIS LIFE AND OF HIS FRIENDSHIPS

WHITTIER

BORN DECEMBER 17, 1807; DIED SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

THE figure of the Quaker poet, as he stood before the world, was unlike that of any other prominent figure which has walked across the stage of life. This may be said, of course, of every individual; yet the likenesses between men of a given era, or between modern men of strong character and those of the ancient world, cause us sometimes to exclaim with wonder at the evident repetitions in development. One can hardly walk through the galleries of antique statues, nor read the passages of Plutarch or Thucydides, without finding this idea thrust upon the mind. But with regard to Whittier, such comparisons were never made, even in fancy. His lithe, upright form, full of quick movement, his burning eye, his keen wit, bore witness to a contrast in himself with the staid, controlled manner and the habit of the sect into which he was born. The love and devotion with which he adhered to the Quaker Church and doctrines served to accentuate his unlikeness to the men of his time, because he early became

also one of the most determined contestants in one of the sternest combats which the world has witnessed.

Neither in the ranks of poets nor divines nor philosophers do we find his counterpart. He felt a certain brotherhood with Robert Burns, and early loved his genius; but where were two more unlike? A kind of solitude of life and experience, greater than that which usually throws its shadow on the human soul, invested him in his passage through the world. The refinement of his education, the calm of nature by which, in youth, he was surrounded, the few books which he made his own, nearly all serious in their character, and the religious atmosphere in which he was nurtured, all tended to form an environment in which knowledge developed into wisdom, and the fiery soul formed a power to restrain or to express its force for the good of humanity.

But as surely as he was a Quaker, so surely also did he feel himself a part of the life of New England. He believed in the ideals of his time; the simple ways of living; the eager nourishing of all good things by the sacrifice of many private wishes; in short, he made one cause with Garrison and Phillips, Emerson and Lowell, Longfellow and Holmes. His standards were often different from those of his friends, but their ideals were on the whole made in common.

His friends were to Whittier, more than to most men, an unfailing source of daily happiness and gratitude. With the advance of years, and the death of his unmarried sister, his friends became all in all to him. They were his mother, his sister, and his brother; but in a certain sense they were always friends of the imagination. He saw some of them only at rare intervals, and sustained his relations with them chiefly in his hurried correspondence. He never suffered himself to complain of what they were not; but what they were, in loyalty to chosen aims, and in their affection for him, was an unending source of pleasure. With the shortcomings of others he dealt gently, having too many shortcomings of his own, as he was accustomed to say, with true humility. He did not, however, look upon the failings of his friends with indifferent eyes. "How strange it is!" he once said. "We see those whom we love going to the very verge of the precipice of self-destruction, yet it is not in our power to hold them back!"

A life of invalidism made consecutive labor of any kind an impossibility. For years he was only able to write for half an hour or less, without stopping to rest, and these precious moments were devoted to some poem or other work for the press, which was almost his only source of income. His correspondence suffered, from a literary point of view; but his letters were none the less delightful to his

friends. To the world of literature they are perhaps less important than those of most men who have achieved a high place.

Whittier was between twenty and thirty years of age when his family left the little farm near Haverhill, where he was born, and moved into the town of Amesbury, eight miles distant. Long before that period he had identified himself with the antislavery cause, and had visited, in the course of his ceaseless labors for the slaves, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. These brief journeys bounded his travels in this world.

In the year 1843 he wrote anxiously to his publisher, Mr. Fields, "I send with this 'The Exiles,' a kind of John Gilpin legend. I am in doubt about it. Read it, and decide for thyself whether it is worth printing."

He began at this rather late period (he was then thirty-six years old) to feel a touch of satisfaction in his comparatively new occupation of writing poetry, and to speak of it without reserve to his chosen friends. His poems were then beginning to bring him into personal relation with the reading world. Many years later, when speaking of the newspaper writing which absorbed his earlier life, he said that he had written a vast amount for the press; he thought that his work would fill nearly ten octavo volumes; but he had grown utterly weary

of throwing so much out into space from which no response ever came back to him. At length he decided to put it all aside, discovering that a power lay in him for more congenial labors.

From the moment of the publication of his second volume of poems, Whittier felt himself fairly launched upon a new career, and seemed to stand with a responsive audience before him. The poems "Toussaint L'Ouverture," "The Slave-Ships," and others belonging to the same period, followed in quick succession. Sometimes they took the form of appeal, sometimes of sympathy, and again they are prophetic or dramatic. He hears the slave mother weep: —

> "Gone — gone — sold and gone
> To the rice-swamp dank and lone,
> From Virginia's hills and waters —
> Woe is me, my stolen daughters!"

Such voices could not be silenced. Though men might turn away and refuse to read or to listen, the music once uttered rang out into the common air, and would not die.

A homely native wit pointed Whittier's familiar correspondence. Writing in 1849, while revising his volume for publication, he speaks of one of his poems as "that rascally old ballad 'Kathleen,'" and adds that it "wants something, though it is already too long." He adds: "The weather this morning is cold enough for an Esquimau purgatory — terrible. What did the old Pilgrims mean by coming here?"

With the years his friendship with his publisher became more intimate. In writing him he often indulged his humor for fun and banter: "Bachelor as I am, I congratulate thee on thy escape from single (misery!) blessedness. It is the very wisest thing thee ever did. Were I autocrat, I would see to it that every young man over twenty-five and every young woman over twenty was married without delay. Perhaps, on second thought, it might be well to keep one old maid and one old bachelor in each town, by way of warning, just as the Spartans did their drunken helots."

Discussing the question of some of his "bad rhymes," and what to do about them, he wrote once: "I heartily thank thee for thy suggestions. Let me have more of them. I had a hearty laugh at thy hint of the 'carnal' bearing of one of my lines. It is now simply *rural*. I might have made some other needful changes had I not been suffering with headache all day."

Occasionally the fire which burned in him would flame out, as when he writes in 1851: "So your Union-tinkers have really caught a 'nigger' at last! A very pretty and refreshing sight it must have been to Sabbath-going Christians yesterday — that *chained* court-house of yours. And Bunker Hill Monument looking down upon all! But the matter is too sad for irony. God forgive the miserable politicians

who gamble for office with dice loaded with human hearts!"

From time to time, also, we find him expressing his literary opinions eagerly and simply as friend may talk with friend, and without aspiring to literary judgment. "Thoreau's 'Walden' is capital reading, but very wicked and heathenish. The practical moral of it seems to be that if a man is willing to sink himself into a woodchuck he can live as cheaply as that quadruped; but after all, for me, I prefer walking on two legs."

It would be unjust to Whittier to quote this talk on paper as his final opinion upon Thoreau, for he afterwards read everything he wrote, and was a warm appreciator of his work.

His enthusiasm for books and for the writers of books never faded. "What do we not all owe you," he writes Mr. Fields, "for your edition of De Tocqueville! It is one of the best books of the century. Thanks, too, for Allingham's poems. After Tennyson, he is my favorite among modern British poets."

And again: "I have just read Longfellow's introduction to his 'Tales of the Inn'—a splendid piece of painting! Neither Boccaccio nor Chaucer has done better. Who wrote 'A Loyal Woman's No?' Was it Lucy Larcom? I thought it might be."

In 1866 he says: "I am glad to see 'Hosea Biglow' in book form. It is a grand book—

the best of its kind for the last half-century or more. It has wit enough to make the reputation of a dozen English satirists."

This appreciation of his contemporaries was a strong feature of his character. His sympathy with the difficulties of a literary life, particularly for women, was very keen. There seem to be few women writers of his time who have failed to receive from his pen some token of recognition. Of Edith Thomas he once said in one of his notelets, "She has a divine gift, and her first book is more than a promise — an assurance." Of Sarah Orne Jewett he was fond as of a daughter, and from their earliest acquaintance his letters are filled with appreciation of her stories. "I do not wonder," he wrote one day, "that 'The Luck of the Bogans' is attractive to the Irish folks, and to everybody else. It is a very successful departure from New England life and scenery, and shows that Sarah is as much at home in Ireland and on the Carolina Sea Islands as in Maine or Massachusetts. I am very proud that I was one of the first to discover her." This predisposition to think well of the work of others gave him the happy opportunity in more than one instance of bringing authors of real talent before the public who might otherwise have waited long for general recognition.

This was especially the case with one of our best beloved New England writers, Lucy Lar-

com. As early as 1853 he wrote a letter to his publisher introducing her work to his notice. "I inclose," he says, "what I regard as a very unique and beautiful little book in MS. I don't wish thee to take my opinion, but the first leisure hour thee have, read it, and I am sure thee will decide that it is exactly the thing for publication. . . . The little prose poems are unlike anything in our literature, and remind me of the German writer Lessing. They are equally adapted to young and old. . . . The author, Lucy Larcom, of Beverly, is a novice in writing and book-making, and with no ambition to appear in print; and were I not perfectly certain that her little collection is worthy of type, I would be the last to encourage her to take even this small step to publicity. Read 'The Impression of Rain-drops,' 'The Steamboat and Niagara,' 'The Laughing Water,' 'My Father's House,' etc."

He thus early became the foster-father of Lucy Larcom's children of the brain, and, what was far more to her, a life-long friend, adviser, and supporter.

One of his most intimate personal friends for many years was Lydia Maria Child. Beginning in the earliest days of the anti-slavery struggle, their friendship lasted into the late and peaceful sunset of their days. As Mrs. Child advanced in years, it was her custom in the winter to leave her cottage at Wayland for

a few months, and to take lodgings in Boston. The dignity and independence of Mrs. Child's character were so great that she knew her friends would find her wherever she might live, and her desire to help on the good work of the world led her to practice the most austere economies. Therefore, instead of finding a comfortable boarding-place, which she might well have excused herself for doing at her advanced age of eighty years, she took rooms in a very plain little house in a remote quarter of the city, and went by the street cars daily to the North End, to get her dinner at a restaurant which she had discovered as being clean, and having wholesome food at the very lowest prices. This enabled her to give away sums which were surprisingly large to those who knew her income. Wendell Phillips, who had always taken charge of her affairs, said to me at the time of her death that when the negroes made their flight into Kansas, Mrs. Child came in as soon as the news arrived and asked him to forward fifty dollars for their assistance.

"I am afraid you cannot afford to send that sum just now," said Mr. Phillips. "Perhaps you will do well to think it over."

"So I will," said Mrs. Child, and departed.

In the course of the day he received a note from her, saying she had made a mistake. It was one hundred dollars that she wished to send.

Mrs. Child's chief pleasure in coming to town was the opportunity she found of seeing her friends. Whittier always sought her out, and their meetings at the houses of their mutual cronies were festivals indeed. They would sit side by side, while memories crowded up and filled their faces with a tenderness they could not express in words. As they told their tales and made merry, they would sit with their hands on each other's knees, and with glances in which tears and laughter were closely intermingled.

"It was good to see Mrs. Child," some one remarked, after one of those interviews.

"Yes," said Whittier, "Lyddy's bunnets aren't always in the fashion" (with a quaint look, as much as to say, "I wonder what you think of anything so bad"), "but we don't like her any the worse for that."

Shortly after Mrs. Child's death he wrote from Amesbury: "My heart has been heavy ever since I heard of dear Maria Child's death. The true, noble, loving soul! *Where* is she? *What* is she? *How* is she? The moral and spiritual economy of God will not suffer such light and love to be lost in blank annihilation. She was herself an evidence of immortality. In a letter written to me at seventy years of age she said: 'The older I grow the more I am awe-struck (not frightened, but awed) by the great mystery of an existence here and

hereafter. No thinking can solve the problem. Infinite wisdom has purposely sealed it from our eyes.' "

There was never a moment of Whittier's life when, prostrated by illness, or overwhelmed by private sorrows, or removed from the haunts of men, he forgot to take a living interest in public affairs, and to study closely the characteristics and works of the men who were our governors. He understood the characters of our public officers as if he had lived with them continually, and his quick apprehension with regard to their movements was something most unusual. De Quincey, we remember, surprised his American friends by taking their hands, as it were, and showing them about Boston, so familiar was he with our localities. Whittier could sit down with politicians and easily prove himself the better man on contested questions. In 1861 he wrote : —

" Our government needs more wisdom than it has thus far had credit for to sustain the national honor and avert a war with England. What a pity that Welles *indorsed* the act of Wilkes in his report ! Why could n't we have been satisfied with the thing without making such a cackling over it ? Apologies are cheap, and we could afford to make a very handsome one in this case. A war with England would ruin us. It is too monstrous to think of. May God in His mercy save us from it ! "

In 1862 and 1863 Whittier was in frequent correspondence with Mr. Fields. Poems suggested by the stirring times were crowding thick upon his mind. "It is a great thing to live in these days. I am thankful for what I have lived to see and hear," he says. "There is nothing for us but the old Methodist ejaculation, 'Glory to God!'"

The volume entitled "In War-time" appeared at this period, though, as usual, he seems to have had little strength and spirit for the revision of his poems. For this, however unwillingly, he would often throw himself upon the kindness of his friend and publisher.

In writing to ask some consideration for the manuscript of an unknown lady during this year, he adds: "I ought to have sent to you about this lady's MS. long ago, but the fact is, I hate to bother you with such matters. I am more and more impressed with the Christian tolerance and patience of publishers, beset as you are with legions of clamorous authors, male and female. I should think you would hate the very sight of one of these importunates. After all, Fields, let us own the truth: writing folks are bores. How few of us (let them say what they will of our genius) have any common sense! I take it that it is the providential business of authors and publishers to torment each other."

These little friendly touches in his corre-

spondence show us the man far more distinctly than many pages of writing about him. Some one has said that Whittier's epistolary style was perfect. Doubtless he could write as good a letter on occasion as any man who ever lived, but he sustained no such correspondence. His notes and letters were homely and affectionate, with the delightful carelessness possible in the talk of intimate friends. They present no ordinary picture of human tenderness, devotion, and charity, and these qualities gain a wonderful beauty when we remember that they come from the same spirit which cried out with Ezekiel : —

> "The burden of a prophet's power
> Fell on me in that fearful hour;
> From off unutterable woes
> The curtain of the future rose;
> I saw far down the coming time
> The fiery chastisement of crime;
> With noise of mingling hosts, and jar
> Of falling towers and shouts of war,
> I saw the nations rise and fall
> Like fire-gleams on my tent's white wall."

"The fire and fury of the brain" were his indeed; a spirit was in him to redeem the land; he was one of God's interpreters; but there was also the tenderness of divine humanity, the love and patience of those who dwell in the courts of the Lord.

Whittier's sister Elizabeth was a sensitive woman, whose delicate health was a constant

source of anxiety to her brother, especially after the death of their mother, when they were left alone together in the home at Amesbury. As one of their intimate friends said, no one could tell which would die first, but they were each so anxious about the other's health that it was a question which would wear away into the grave first, for the other's sake.

It was Whittier's sad experience to be deprived of the companionship of all those most dear to him, and for over twenty years to live without that intimate household communion for the loss of which the world holds no recompense. For several years, before and after his sister Elizabeth's death, Whittier wore the look of one who was very ill. His large dark eyes burned with peculiar fire, and contrasted with his pale brow and attenuated figure. He had a sorrowful, stricken look, and found it hard enough to reconstruct his life, missing the companionship and care of his sister, and her great sympathy with his own literary work. There was a likeness between the two; the same speaking eyes marked the line from which they sprang, and their kinship and inheritance. Old New England people were quick to recognize "the Bachiler eyes," not only in the Whittiers, but in Daniel Webster, Caleb Cushing, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and William Bachiler Greene, a man less widely known than these distinguished compatriots. Mr. Greene was,

however, a man of mark in his own time, a daring thinker, and one who was possessed of much brave originality, whose own deep thoughtfulness was always planting seeds of thought in others, and who can certainly never be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to be his friends.

These men of the grand eyes were all descended from a gifted old preacher of great fame in early colonial days, a man of true distinction and devoted service, in spite of the dishonor with which he let his name be shadowed in his latest years. It would be most interesting to trace the line still further back into the past; but when the Bachiler eyes were by any chance referred to in Whittier's presence, he would look shyly askance, and sometimes speak, half with pride, half with a sort of humorous compassion, of his Hampton ancestor. The connection of the Whittiers of Haverhill with the Greenes was somewhat closer than with other branches of the Bachiler line. One of the poet's most entertaining reminiscences of his boyhood was the story of his first visit to Boston. Mr. William Greene's mother was an interesting woman of strong, independent character and wide interests, wonted to the life of cities, and one of the first, in spite of his boyish shyness, to appreciate her young relative. Her kind eagerness, during one of her occasional visits to the Whittiers, that Greenleaf

should come to see her when he came to Boston, fell in with his own dreams, and a high desire to see the sights of the great town.

One can easily see how his imagination glorified the natural expectations of a country boy, and when the time arrived how the whole household lent itself to furthering so great an expedition. He was not only to have a new suit of clothes, but they were, for the first time, to be trimmed with "boughten buttons," to the lad's complete satisfaction, his mind being fixed upon those as marking the difference between town and country fashions. When the preparations were made, his fresh homespun costume, cut after the best usage of the Society of Friends, seemed to him all that heart could desire, and he started away bravely by the coach to pass a week in Boston. His mother had not forgotten to warn him of possible dangers and snares; it was then that he made her a promise which, at first from principle and later from sentiment, he always most sacredly kept — that he would not enter a playhouse. As he told the story, it was easy for a listener to comprehend how many good wishes flew after the adventurer, and how much wild beating of the heart he himself experienced as the coach rolled away; how bewildering the city streets appeared when he found himself at the brief journey's end. After he had reported himself to Mrs. Greene, and been received with

most affectionate hospitality, and had promised to reappear at tea-time, he sallied forth to the great business of sight-seeing.

"I wandered up and down the streets," he used to say. "Somehow it was n't just what I expected, and the crowd was worse and worse after I got into Washington Street; and when I got tired of being jostled, it seemed to me as if the folks might get by if I waited a little while. Some of them looked at me, and so I stepped into an alleyway and waited and looked out. Sometimes there did n't seem to be so many passing, and I thought of starting, and then they 'd begin again. 'T was a terrible stream of people to me. I began to think my new clothes and the buttons were all thrown away. I stayed there a good while." (This was said with great amusement.) "I began to be homesick. I thought it made no difference at all about my having those boughten buttons."

How long he waited, or what thoughts were stirred by this first glimpse at the ceaseless procession of humanity, who can say? But there was a sequel to the tale. He was invited to return to Mrs. Greene's to drink tea and meet a company of her guests. Among them were some ladies who were very gay and friendly; we can imagine that they were attracted by the handsome eyes and quaint garb of the young Friend, and by his quick wit and

homely turns of speech, all the more amusing for a rustic flavor. They tried to tease him a little, but they must have quickly found their match in drollery, while the lad was already a citizen of the commonwealth of books. No doubt the stimulus of such a social occasion brought him, as well as the strangers, into new acquaintance with his growing gifts. But presently one of the ladies, evidently the favorite until this shocking moment, began to speak of the theatre, and asked for the pleasure of his presence at the play that very night, she herself being the leading player. At this disclosure, and the frank talk of the rest of the company, their evident interest in the stage, and regard for a young person who had chosen such a profession, the young Quaker lad was stricken with horror. In after years he could only remember it with amusement, but that night his mother's anxious warnings rang in his ears, and he hastened to escape from such a snare. Somehow this pleasant young companion of the tea party hardly represented the wickedness of playhouses as Puritan New England loved to picture them; but between a sense of disappointment and homesickness and general insecurity, he could not sleep, and next morning when the early stage-coach started forth, it carried him as passenger. He said nothing to his amazed family of the alarming episode of the playing-woman, nor of his deep conscious-

ness of the home-made clothes, but he no doubt reflected much upon this Boston visit in the leisure of the silent fields and hills.

It is impossible to convey to those who never saw Mr. Whittier the charm of his gift of story telling; the exactness and simplicity of his reminiscences were flavored by his poetical insight and dramatic representation. It was a wonderful thing to hear him rehearse in the twilight the scenes of his youth, and the figures that came and went in that small world; the pathos and humor of his speech can never be exceeded; and there can never be again so complete a linking of the ancient provincial lore and the new life and thought of New England as there was in him. While he was with us, his poems seemed hardly to give sufficient witness of that rich store of thought and knowledge; he was always making his horizon wider, at the same time that he came into closer sympathy with things near at hand. For him the ancient customs of a country neighborhood, the simple characters, the loves and hates and losses of a rural household, stood for a type of human life in every age, and were never trivial or narrow. As he grew older, these became less and less personal. He sometimes appeared to think of death rather than the person who had died, and of love and grief rather than of those who felt their influence. His was the life of the poet first of all, and yet the tale of his sympa-

thetic friendliness, and his generosities and caretaking for others will never be fully told. The dark eyes had great powers of insight; they could flash scorn as well as shine with the soft light of encouragement.

He accustomed himself, of course, to more frequent visits to Boston after his sister's death, but he was seldom, if ever, persuaded to go to the Saturday Club, to which so many of his friends belonged. Sometimes he would bring a new poem for a private first reading, and for that purpose would stay to breakfast or luncheon; but late dinners were contrary to the habit of his life, and he seldom sat down to one.

"I take the liberty," he wrote one day, "of inclosing a little poem of mine which has beguiled some weary hours. I hope thee will like it. How strange it seems not to read it to my sister! If thee have read Schoolcraft, thee will remember what he says of the 'Little Vanishers.' The legend is very beautiful, and I hope I have done it justice in some sort."

In the spring of 1865 he came to Campton, on the Pemigewasset River, in New Hampshire, a delightful place for those who love green hills and the mystery of rivers.

We were passing a few weeks there by ourselves, and it was a great surprise and pleasure to see our friend. He drove up to the door one afternoon just as the sun was slanting to the

west, too late to drive away again that day. In our desire to show him all the glories of the spot, we carried him out at once, up the hillside, leaping across the brook, gathering pennyroyal and Indian posy as we went, past the sheep and on and up, until he, laughing, said: "Look here, I can't follow thee; besides, I think I've seen more of this life than thee have, and it isn't all so new to me! Come and sit down here; I'm tired." We sat a while overlooking the wonderful panorama, the winding river, the hills and fields all green and radiant, listening at times to a mountain stream which came with wild and solitary roar from its solemn home among the farther heights. Presently we returned to supper; and afterwards, sitting in the little parlor which looked towards the sunset on the high hills far away, his mind seemed to rise into a higher atmosphere. He began by quoting the last verse of Emerson's "Sphinx:" —

> "Uprose the merry Sphinx,
> And couched no more in stone;
> She melted into purple cloud,
> She silvered in the moon;
> She spired into a yellow flame;
> She flowered in blossoms red;
> She flowed into a foaming wave;
> She stood Monadnock's head."

He talked long and earnestly upon the subject of our spiritual existence independent of the body. I have often heard him dwell upon

this subject since; but the awful glory of the hills, the dark and silence of our little parlor, the assured speech touching the unseen, of one who had thought much and suffered much, and found a refuge in the tabernacle not made with hands, were very impressive. We felt that "it was good for us to be there."

Speaking of his faith in the visions of others — though he did not have these visions himself, and believed they were not vouchsafed to all — he told us of a prophecy that was written down twenty-five years before by an old man in Sandwich (a village among the hills, about fifteen miles from Campton), predicting the terrible civil war which had just been raging between the North and the South. This man was in the fields at noonday, when a darkness fell upon his sight and covered the earth. He beheld the divided nation and the freed people and the final deliverance from the terrors of war. The whole series of events were clearly detailed, and Whittier had stored them away in his memory. He said that only one thing was wrong. He foretold foreign intervention, from which we were happily spared. The daughter of this prophet was living; he knew her well, — an excellent woman and a Friend who was often impressed to speak in meeting. "She is good," said Whittier, "and speaks from her experience, and for that reason I like to hear her."

Spiritualism, as it is called in our day, was a

subject which earnestly and steadily held his attention. Having lived very near to the Salem witchcraft experience in early times, the topic was one that came more closely home to his mind than to almost any one else in our century. There are many passages in his letters on this question which state his own mental position very clearly.

"I have had as good a chance to see a ghost," he once said, "as anybody ever had, but not the slightest sign ever came to me. I do not doubt what others tell me, but I sometimes wonder over my own incapacity. I should like to see some dear ghost walk in and sit down by me when I am here alone. The doings of the old witch days have never been explained; and as we are so soon to be transferred to another state, how natural it appears that some of us should have glimpses of it here! We all feel the help we receive from the Divine Spirit. Why deny, then, that some men have it more directly and more visibly than others?"

In his memories of New England country life when he was a child, this subject was closely interwoven with every association. He had an uncle, who made one of the family, a man by no means devoid of the old-fashioned faith in witches, and who was always ready to give his testimony. He remembered an old woman in the neighborhood who was accused of being a witch, and that when his uncle's opinion was

asked about her, he replied that he *knew she was a witch.*

"How do you know?" they said.

"Oh," he replied, "I 've seen her!"

Whittier recalled this uncle's returning one night from a long drive through the woods; and when he came in and sat down by the fire after supper, he told them that he had seen three old women in a clearing around a kettle, "a-stirrin' of it." When they saw him, they moved off behind the trees, but he distinctly saw the smoke from the kettle, and he recognized the old woman in question as one of the three beyond the shadow of a doubt. No doubt some curious rustic remedy or charm was being brewed in the dark of the moon. Nothing escaped his observation that was printed or circulated upon this topic. In the summer of 1882 he discovered that Old Orchard Beach had been made a theatre of new wonders. Dr. —— had been there, "working Protestant miracles, and the lame walk and the deaf hear under his manipulation and holy oil. There seems no doubt that cures of nervous diseases are really sometimes effected, and I believe in the efficacy of prayer. The nearer we are drawn to Him who is the source of all life, the better it must be for soul and body."

In Robert Dale Owen he always took a strong and friendly interest; and when, late in life, reverses fell upon Mr. Owen in the shape of

humiliating revelations of his own credulity, Whittier's relations to him were unchanged. "I have read with renewed interest," he wrote, "the paper of R. D. Owen. I had a long talk with him years ago on the subject. He was a very noble and good man, and I was terribly indignant when he was so deceived by the pretended materialized 'Katie King.' I could never quite believe in 'materialization,' as I had reason to know that much of it was fraudulent. It surely argues a fathomless depth of depravity to trifle with the yearning love of those who have lost dear ones, and 'long for the touch of a vanished hand.'"

In the year 1866 a very fine portrait of Abraham Lincoln was engraved by Marshall. A copy of it was presented to Whittier, who wrote concerning it: "It was never my privilege to know Abraham Lincoln personally, and the various pictures have more or less failed to satisfy my conception of him. They might be, and probably were, what are called 'good likenesses,' so far as outline and detail were concerned; but to me they always seemed to lack one great essential of a true portrait, — the informing spirit of the man within. This I find in Marshall's portrait. The old harsh lines and unmistakable mouth are there, without flattery or compromise; but over all and through all the pathetic sadness, the wise simplicity and

tender humanity of the man are visible. It is the face of the speaker at Gettysburg, and the writer of the second inaugural."

It was during this year, also, that the "Tent on the Beach" was written. He had said again and again in his notes that he had this work in hand, but always declared he was far too ill to finish it during the year. Nevertheless, in the last days of December the package was forwarded to his publisher. "Tell me," he wrote, "if thee object to the personal character of it. I have represented thee and Bayard Taylor and myself living a wild tent life for a few summer days on the beach, where, for lack of something better, I read my stories to the others. My original plan was the old 'Decameron' one, each personage to read his own poems; but the thing has been so hackneyed by repetition that I abandoned it in disgust, and began anew. The result is before thee. Put it in type or the fire. I am content — like Eugene Aram, 'prepared for either fortune.'"

He had intended also to accomplish some work in prose at this period, but the painful condition of his health forbade it. "I am forbidden to use my poor head," he said, "so I have to get along as I can without it. The Catholic St. Leon, thee knows, walked alert as usual after his head was cut off."

I am tempted to quote still further from a letter of this period: "I inclose a poem of

mine which has never seen the light, although it was partly in print from my first draft to spare me the trouble of copying. It presents my view of Christ as the special manifestation of the love of God to humanity. . . . Let me thank the publisher of Milton's prose for the compliment of the dedication. Milton's prose has long been my favorite reading. My whole life has felt the influence of his writings."

There is a delightful note on the subject of the popularity of the "Tent on the Beach," which shows his natural pleasure in success. "Think," he says, "of bagging in this tent of ours an unsuspecting public at the rate of a thousand a day! This will never do. The swindle is awful. Barnum is a saint to us. I am bowed with a sense of guilt, ashamed to look an honest man in the face. But Nemesis is on our track; somebody will puncture our tent yet, and it will collapse like a torn balloon. I know I shall have to catch it; my back tingles in anticipation."

It was perhaps in this same year, 1866, that we made an autumn visit to Whittier which is still a well-remembered pleasure. The weather was warm and the fruit was ripening in the little Amesbury garden. We loitered about for a while, I remember, in the afternoon, among the falling pear leaves and in the sweet air, but he soon led the way into his garden-room, and

fell into talk. He was an adept in the art of conversation, having trained himself in the difficult school of a New England farmhouse, fit ground for such athletics, being typically bare of suggestion and of relief from outside resources. The unbroken afternoons and the long evenings, when the only hope of entertainment is in such fire as one brain can strike from another, produce a situation as difficult to the unskilled as that of an untaught swimmer when first cast into the sea. Persons long habituated to these contests could face the position calmly, and see the early "tea-things" disappear and the contestants draw their chairs around the fire with a kind of zeal; but to one new to such experience there was room for heart-sinkings when preparations were made, by putting fresh sticks on the fire, for sitting from gloaming to vespers, and sometimes on again unwearied till midnight.

Mrs. Stowe and Whittier were the invincible Lancelots of these tourneys, and any one who has had the privilege of sitting by the New England hearthstone with either of them will be ready to confess that no playhouse, or game, or any of the distractions the city may afford, can compare with the satisfaction of such an experience. Upon the visit in question Whittier talked of the days of his anti-slavery life in 1835 or 1836, when the English agitator, George Thompson, first came to this country. The

latter was suffering from the attack of many a mob, and was fatigued by frequent speaking and as frequent abuse. Whittier invited him to his home in the neighborhood of Haverhill, where he could find quiet and rest during the warm weather. Thompson accepted the invitation, and remained with him a fortnight. They used to rake hay together, and go about the farm unmolested. At length, however, a pressing invitation came for Thompson to go to Concord, New Hampshire, to speak in the cause of freedom, and afterwards to continue on to the village of Plymouth and visit a friend in that place. Whittier was included in the invitation, and it was settled that they should accept the call. They traveled peaceably enough in their own chaise as far as Concord, where the speech was delivered without interruption; but when they attempted to leave the hall after the address was ended, they found it almost impossible. A crowd followed them with the apparent intention of stoning and killing them. "I understood how St. Paul felt when he was thrice stoned," said Whittier. The missiles fell around them and upon them like hail, not touching their heads, providentially, although he could still remember the sound of the stones when they missed their aim and struck the wooden fence behind them. They were made very lame by the blows, but they managed to reach their friend's house, where they

sprang up the steps three at a time, before the crowd knew where they were going. Their host was certainly a brave man, for he took them in at the door, and then throwing it open, exclaimed, "Whoever comes in here must come over my dead body." The door was then barricaded, and the crowd rushed round to the back of the house, thinking that their victims intended to go out that way; but the travelers waited until it was dark, when Whittier exchanged his Friend's hat for that of his host, and, everything else peculiar about his dress being well disguised, the two managed to pass out unperceived by the crowd, and go on their way to Plymouth. They stopped one night on their journey at a small inn, where the landlord asked if they had heard anything of the riot in Concord. Two men had been there, he said, one an Englishman by the name of Thompson, who had been making abominable and seditious speeches, stirring up people about "the niggers;" the other was a young Quaker by the name of Whittier, who was always making speeches. He heard him lecture once himself, he said (a base lie, Whittier told us, because he had never "lectured" in his life), and it was well that active measures had been taken against them. "We heard him all through," said Whittier; "and then, just as I had my foot on the step of the chaise, ready to drive away from the door, I remarked to him, 'Would n't

you like to see that Thompson of whom you have been speaking?' I took good care not to use 'plain' language (that is, the Quaker form). 'I rather think I should,' said the man. 'Well, this is Mr. Thompson,' I said, as I jumped into the chaise. 'And this is the Quaker, Whittier,' said Thompson, driving away as fast as he could. I looked back, and saw him standing, mouth wide open, gazing after us in the greatest astonishment."

The two kept on to Plymouth, where they were nearly mobbed a second time. Years after, Whittier said that once when he was passing through Portland, a man, seeing him go by, stepped out of his shop and asked if his name were Whittier, and if he were not the man who was stoned, years before, by a mob at Concord. The answer being in the affirmative, he said he believed a devil possessed him that night; for he had no reason to wish evil either to Whittier or Thompson, yet he was filled with a desire to kill them, and he thought he should have done so if they had not escaped. He added that the mob was like a crowd of demons, and he knew one man who had mixed a black dye to dip them in, which would be almost impossible to get off. He could not explain to himself or to another the state of mind he was in.

The next morning we walked with Whittier again in his little garden, and saw his grapes, which were a source of pride and pleasure. One

vine, he told us, came up from a tiny rootlet sent to him by Charles Sumner, in a letter from Washington.

Later we strolled forth into the village street as far as the Friends' meeting-house, and sat down upon the steps while he told us something of his neighbors. He himself, he said, had planted the trees about the church : they were then good-sized trees. He spoke very earnestly about the worship of the Friends. All the associations of his youth and all the canons of his education and development were grounded on the Friends' faith and doctrine, and he was anxious that they should show a growth commensurate with the age. He disliked many of the innovations, but his affectionate spirit clung to his people, and he longed to see them drawing to themselves a larger measure of spiritual life, day by day. He loved the old custom of sitting in silence, and hoped they would not stray away into habits of much speaking. The old habits of the meeting-house were very dear to him.

One cold, clear morning in January I heard his early ring at the door. He had been ill, but was so much better that he was absolutely gay. He insisted upon blowing the fire, which, as sometimes happens, will struggle to do its worst on the coldest days ; and as the flames at last began to roar, his spirits rose with them. He

was rejoicing over Garibaldi's victory. The sufferings of Italy had been so terrible that even one small victory in their behalf seemed a great gain. He said that he had been trying to arouse the interest of the Friends, but it usually took about two years to awaken them thoroughly on any great topic!

He remained several hours that morning talking over his hopes for the country, — of politics, of Charles Sumner, of whom he said, "Sumner is always fundamentally right;" and of John Bright, for whose great gifts he had sincere admiration. Soon afterwards, at the time of this great man's death, Whittier wrote to us: "Spring is here to-day, warm, birdfull. . . . It seems strange that I am alive to welcome her when so many have passed away with the winter, and among them that stalwartest of Englishmen, John Bright, sleeping now in the daisied grounds of Rochdale, never more to move the world with his surpassing eloquence. How I regret that I have never seen him! We had much in common in our religious faith, our hatred of war and oppression. His great genius seemed to me to be always held firmly in hand by a sense of duty, and by the practical common sense of a shrewd man of business. He fought through life like an old knight-errant, but without enthusiasm. He had no personal ideals. I remember once how he remonstrated with me for my admiration for Gen-

eral Gordon. He looked upon that wonderful personality as a wild fighter, a rash adventurer, doing evil that good might come. He could not see him as I saw him, giving his life for humanity, alone and unfriended, in that dreadful Soudan. He did not like the idea of fighting Satan with Satan's weapons. Lord Salisbury said truly that John Bright was the greatest orator England had produced, and his eloquence was only called out by what he regarded as the voice of God in his soul."

When at length Whittier rose to go that winter morning, with the feeling that he had already taken too large a piece out of the day, we pressed him to stay longer, since it was already late. "Why can't you stay?" urged his host. "Because, I tell you, I don't want to," which set us all laughing, and settled the question.

Our first knowledge of his arrival in town was usually that early and punctual ring at the door to which I have referred. He would come in looking pale and thin, but full of fire, and, as we would soon find, of a certain vigor. He became interested one morning in a plan proposed to him for making a collection of poems for young people, one which he finally completed with the aid of Miss Lucy Larcom. We got down from the shelf Longfellow's "Poets and Poetry of Europe," and looked it over together. "Annie of Tharaw" was a great favorite of his, and the poem by Dirk Smit, on "The Death

of an Infant," found his ready appreciation. Whittier easily fell from these into talk of Burns, who was his master and ideal. "He lives, next to Shakespeare," he said, "in the heart of humanity."

In speaking of Rossetti and of his ballad of "Sister Helen," he confessed to being strangely attracted to this poem because he could remember seeing his mother, "who was as good a woman as ever lived," and his aunt performing the same strange act of melting a waxen figure of a clergyman of their time.

The solemnity of the affair made a deep impression on his mind, as a child, for the death of the clergyman in question was confidently expected. His "heresies" had led him to experience this cabalistic treatment.

There was some talk, also, that morning of the advantages, in these restless days, accruing to those who "stay put" in this world, instead of to those who are forever beating about, searching for greater opportunities from position or circumstance. He laughed heartily over the tale, which had just then reached us, of Carlyle going to hunt up a new residence in London with a map of the world in his pocket.

We asked Whittier if he never felt tempted to go to Quebec from his well-beloved haunts in the White Mountains. "Oh no," he replied. "I know it all by books and pictures just as well as if I had seen it."

This talk of traveling reminded him of a circus which came one season to Amesbury. "I was in my garden," he said, "when I saw an Arab wander down the street, and by and by stop and lean against my gate. He held a small book in his hand, which he was reading from time to time when he was not occupied with gazing about him. Presently I went to talk with him, and found he had lived all his life on the edge of the Desert until he had started for America. He was very homesick, and longed for the time of his return. He had hired himself for a term of years to the master of the circus. He held the Koran in his hand, and was delighted to find a friend who had also read his sacred book. He opened his heart still further then, and said how he longed for his old, wild life in the Desert, for a sight of the palms and the sands, but, above all, for its freedom." This interview made a deep impression, naturally, upon Whittier's mind, he, who was no traveler himself, having thus sung: —

> "He who wanders widest, lifts
> No more of beauty's jealous veil
> Than he who from his doorway sees
> The miracle of flowers and trees."

The memory of a visit to Amesbury, made once in September, vividly remains with me. It was early in the month, when the lingering heat of summer seems sometimes to gather fresh intensity from the fact that we are so soon

to hear the winds of autumn. Amesbury had greatly altered of late years; large enough to be a city," our friend declared; "but I am not fat enough to be an alderman." To us it was still a small village, though somewhat dustier and less attractive than when we first knew it.

As we approached the house, we saw him from a distance characteristically gazing down the road for us, from his front yard, and then at the first glimpse suddenly disappearing, to come forth again to meet us, quite fresh and quiet, from his front door. It had been a very hot, dry summer, and everything about that place, as about every other, was parched and covered with dust. There had been no rain for weeks, and the village street was then quite innocent of watering carts. The fruit hung heavily from the nearly leafless trees, and the soft thud of the pears and apples as they fell to the ground could be heard on every side in the quiet house-yards. The sun struggled feebly through the mists during the noontide hours, when a still heat pervaded rather than struck the earth; and then in the early afternoon, and late into the next morning, a stirless cloud seemed to cover the face of the world. These mists were much increased by the burning of peat and brush, and, alas! of the very woods themselves in every direction. Altogether, as Whittier said, quaintly, "it was very encouraging weather for the Millerites."

His niece, who bears the name of his beloved sister, was then the mistress of his house, and we were soon made heartily welcome. Everything was plain and neat as became a Friend's household; but as the village had grown to be a stirring place, and the house stood close upon the dusty road, such charming neatness must sometimes have been a difficult achievement. The noonday meal was soon served and soon ended, and then we sat down behind the half-closed blinds, looking out upon the garden, the faded vines, and almost leafless trees. It was a cosy room, with its Franklin stove, at this season surmounted by a bouquet, and a table between the windows, where was a larger bouquet, which Whittier himself had gathered that morning in anticipation of our arrival. He seemed brighter and better than we had dared to hope, and was in excellent mood for talking. Referring again to the Millerites, who had been so reanimated by the forest fires, he said he had been deeply impressed lately with their deplorable doctrines. "Continually disappointed because we don't all burn up on a sudden, they forget to be thankful for their preservation from the dire fate they predict with so much complacency."

He had just received a proof of his poem "Miriam," with the introduction, and he could not be content until they had both been read aloud to him. After the reading they were

duly commented upon, and revised until he thought he could do no more ; yet twice before our departure the proofs were taken out of the hand-bag where they were safely stowed away, and again more or less altered.

Whittier's ever-growing fame was not taken by him as a matter of course. "I cannot think very well of my own things," he used to say ; "and what is mere fame worth when thee is at home, alone, and sick with headaches, unable either to read or to write?" Nevertheless, he derived very great pleasure and consolation from the letters and tributes which poured in upon him from hearts he had touched or lives he had quickened. "That I like," he would say sometimes ; "that is worth having." But he must often have known the deeps of sadness in winter evenings when he was too ill to touch book or pen, and when he could do nothing during the long hours but sit and think over the fire.

We slept in Elizabeth's chamber. The portrait of their mother, framed in autumn leaves gathered in the last autumn of her life, hung upon the wall. Here, too, as in our bedroom at Dickens's, the Diary of Pepys lay on the table. Dickens had read his copy faithfully, and written notes therein. Of this copy the leaves had not been cut ; but with it lay the "Prayers of the Ages," and volumes of poems, which had all been well read, and "Pickwick" upon the top.

In the year 1867 Charles Dickens came to America to give his famous Readings. Whittier, as we have seen, was seldom tempted out of his country home and habitual ways, but Dickens was for one moment too much for him. To our surprise, he wrote to ask if he could possibly get a seat to hear him. "I see there is a crazy rush for tickets." A favorable answer was dispatched to him as soon as practicable, but he had already repented of the indiscretion. "My dear Fields," he wrote, "up to the last moment I have hoped to occupy the seat so kindly promised me for this evening. But I find I must give it up. Gladden with it the heart of some poor wretch who dangled and shivered all in vain in your long *queue* the other morning. I must read my 'Pickwick' alone, as the Marchioness played cribbage. I should so like, nevertheless, to see Dickens and shake that creative hand of his! It is as well, doubtless, so far as he is concerned, that I cannot do it; he will have enough and too much of that, I fear. I dreamed last night I saw him surrounded by a mob of ladies, each with her scissors snipping at his hair, and he seemed in a fair way to be 'shaven and shorn,' like the Priest in 'The House that Jack Built.'"

The large events of humanity were to Whittier a portion of his own experience, his personal life being, in the ordinary sense, devoid of incident. The death of Charles Dickens, in

1871, was a personal loss, just as his life had been a living gain to this remote and invalid man. One long quiet summer afternoon shortly after, Whittier joined us for the sake of talking about Dickens. He told us what sunshine came from him into his own solemn and silent country life, and what grateful love he must ever bear to him. He wished to hear all that could be told of him as a man. Tea came, and the sun went down, and still he talked and questioned, and then, after a long silence, he said suddenly: "What 's he doing now? Sometimes I say, in Shakespeare's phrase, O for some 'courteous ghost,' but nothing ever comes to me. He was so human I should think thee must *see* him sometimes. It seems as if he were the very person to manifest himself and give us a glimpse beyond. I believe I have faith; I sometimes think I have; but this desire to see just a little way is terribly strong in me. I have expressed something of it in my verses to Mrs. Child about Loring."

He spoke also of the significance of our prayers; of their deep value to our spirit in constantly renewing the sense of dependence; and further, since we "surely find that our prayers are answered, what blindness and fatuity there is in neglect or abuse of our privilege!"

He was thinking of editing a new edition of John Woolman. He hoped to induce certain people who would read his own books to read that, by writing a preface for it.

The death of Henry Ward Beecher was also a loss and a sadness to him in his solitary life. "I am saddened by the death of Beecher," he wrote; "he was so strong, so generous, so warm hearted, and so brave and stalwart in so many good causes. It is a mighty loss. He had faults, like all of us, and needed forgiveness; but I think he could say, with David of old, that he would rather fall into the Lord's hands than into the hands of man."

It is anticipating the years and interrupting the narrative to mention here a few of the men who gladdened his later life by their friendship, but the subject demands a brief space before we return to the current story of his days.

Matthew Arnold went to see him upon his arrival in this country, and it is needless to say that Whittier derived sincere pleasure from the visit; but Arnold's delightful recognition of Whittier's "In School Days," as one of the perfect poems which must live, gave him fresh assurance of fulfilled purpose in existence. He had followed Arnold with appreciation from his earliest appearance in the world of letters, and knew him, as it were, "by heart" long before a personal interview was possible. In a letter written after Arnold's return to England, he says: "I share thy indignation at the way our people have spoken of him — one of the foremost men of our time, a true poet, a wise critic, and a brave, upright man, to whom all the

English-speaking people owe a debt of gratitude. I am sorry I could not see him again."

When the end came, a few years later, he was among the first to say, "What a loss English literature has sustained in the death of Matthew Arnold!"

As I have already suggested, he kept the run of all the noteworthy persons who came to Boston quite as surely as they kept in pursuit of him.

"I hope thee will see the wonderful prophet of the Bramo Somaj, Mozoomdar, before he leaves the country. I should have seen him in Boston but for illness last week. That movement in India is the greatest event in the history of Christianity since the days of Paul.

"So the author of 'Christie Johnstone' is dead. I have read and re-read that charming little story with ever-increasing admiration. I am sorry for the coarseness of some of his later writings; but he was, after all, a great novelist, second only in our times to George Eliot, Dickens, and Thackeray. . . . I shall be glad to hear more about Mr. Wood's and Mrs. ——'s talks. Any hint or sign or token from the unseen and spiritual world is full of solemn interest, standing as I do on the shore of 'that vast ocean I must sail so soon.' . . .

"You will soon have Amelia Edwards again with you. I am sorry that I have not been able to call on her. Pray assure her of my sincere respect and admiration."

And again: "Have thee seen and heard the Hindoo Mohini? He seems to have really converted some people. I hear that one of them has got a Bible!"

The phrase that he is "beset by pilgrims" occurs frequently in his letters, contrasted with pleased expressions, and descriptions of visits from Phillips Brooks, Canon Farrar, Governor and Mrs. Claflin, and other friends whose faces were always a joy to him.

I have turned aside from the narrative of every-day life to mention these friends; but it is interesting to return and recall the earlier years, when he came one day to dine in Charles Street with Mr. Emerson. As usual, his coming had been very uncertain. He was never to be counted upon as a visitor, but at length the moment came when he was in better health than ordinary, and the stars were in conjunction. I can recall his saying to Emerson: "I had to choose between hearing thee at thy lecture and coming here to see thee. I chose to see thee. I could not do both." Emerson was heard to say to him solicitously: "I hope you are pretty well, sir! I believe you formerly bragged of bad health."

It was Whittier's custom, however, to make quite sure that all "lions" and other disturbing elements were well out of the way before he turned his steps to the library in Charles Street. I recall his coming one Sunday morning when

we were at church, and waiting until our return. He thought that would be a safe moment! He was full, as Madame de Sévigné says, "*de conversations infinies*," being especially interested just then in the question of schools for the freedmen, and eagerly discussed ways and means for starting and supporting them.

We were much amused by his ingenuity in getting contributions from his own town. It appears he had taken into consideration the many carriage-makers in Amesbury. He suggested that each one of these men should give some part of a carriage — one the wheels, one the body, one the furnishings, thus dividing it in all among twenty workmen. When it was put together, there stood a carriage which was sold for two hundred dollars, exactly the sum requisite for Amesbury to give.

He had just parted from his niece, who had gone to teach the freed people in a small Southern village. He could not help feeling anxious for her welfare. She and her young co-workers would be the only Northerners in the place. Of course, such new comers would be regarded with no friendly eye by the "mean whites," and their long distance from home and from any protection would make their position a very forlorn one indeed if the natives should turn against them. He was fearful lest they should be half starved. However, they had departed in excellent spirits, which went a long way to cheer everybody concerned.

He was also full of sympathy and anxiety regarding the well being of a young colored girl here at the North, whose sad situation he had been called upon to relieve; and after discussing ways and laying plans for her comfort (which he afterwards adhered to, until in later years she was placed in a happy home of her own), he went on to discuss the needs of yet a third young person, another victim of the war, who was then teaching in Amesbury. He was almost as remarkable as Mrs. Child in his power of making his own small provision into a broad mantle to cover many shoulders. He was undaunted, too, in his efforts, where his own resources failed, to get what was needed by the help of others. His common sense was so great and his own habits so frugal, that no one could imagine a dollar wasted or misapplied that was confided to his stewardship. His benefactions were ceaseless, and they were one of the chief joys of his later life. The subject of what may be done for this or that person or cause is continually recurring in his letters. Once I find this plea in verse after the manner of Burns: —

> "O well-paid author, fat-fed scholar,
> Whose pockets jingle with the dollar,
> No sheriff's hand upon your collar,
> No duns to bother,
> Think on 't, a tithe of what ye swallow
> Would save your brother!"

And again and again there are passages in his

letters like the following: "I hope the Industrial Home may be saved, and wish I was a rich man just long enough to help save it. As it is, if the subscription needs $30 to fill it up, I shall be glad to give the mite." "I have long followed Maurice," he says again, "in his work as a religious and social reformer — a true apostle of the gospel of humanity. He saw clearly, and in advance of his clerical brethren, the necessity of wise and righteous dealing with the momentous and appalling questions of labor and poverty."

He wrote one day: "If you go to Richmond, why don't you visit Hampton and Old Point Comfort, where that Christian knight and latter-day Galahad, General Armstrong, is making his holy experiment? I think it would be worth your while."

General Armstrong and his brave work in founding and maintaining the Hampton School for the education, at first, of the colored people alone, and finally for the Indians also, was one of the near and living interests of Whittier's life. Often and often in his letters do we find references to the subject; either he regrets having to miss seeing the general, upon one of his Northern trips, or he rejoices in falling in with some of the teachers at Asquam Lake or elsewhere, or his note is jubilant over some new gift which will make the general's work for the year less difficult.

Once he writes: "I am grieved to hear of General Armstrong's illness. I am not surprised at it. He has been working in his noble cause beyond any mortal man's strength. He must have a rest if it is possible for him, and his friends must now keep up the school by redoubled efforts. Ah me! There is so much to be done in this world! I wish I were younger, or a millionaire."

And yet again: "I had the pleasure of sending General Armstrong at Christmas, with my annual subscription, one thousand dollars which a friend placed in my hand. I wish our friend could be relieved from the task of raising money by a hundred such donations."

The choice of the early breakfast hour for his visits was his own idea. He was glad to hit upon a moment which was not subject to interruptions, one when he could talk at his ease of books and men. These visits were always a surprise. He liked to be abroad in good season, and had rarely missed seeing the sun rise in forty years. He knew, too, that we were not late people, and that his visits could never be untimely. Occasionally, with the various evening engagements of a city, we were not altogether fit to receive him, but it was a pleasure to hear his footstep in the morning, and to know that we should find him in the library by the fire. He was himself a bad sleeper, seldom, as he said, putting a solid bar

of sleep between day and day, and therefore often early abroad to question the secrets of the dawn. We owe much of the intimate friendship of our life to these morning hours spent in private, uninterrupted talk.

"I have lately felt great sympathy with ——," he said one morning, "for I have been kept awake one hundred and twenty hours — an experience I should not care to try again."

One of Whittier's summer pleasures, in which he occasionally indulged himself, was a visit to the Isles of Shoals. He loved to see his friend Celia Thaxter in her island home, and he loved the freedom of a large hotel. He liked to make arrangements with a group of his more particular friends to meet him there; and when he was well enough to leave his room, he might be seen in some carefully chosen corner of the great piazzas, shady or sunny, as the day invited him, enjoying the keenest happiness in the voluntary society and conversation of those dear to him. Occasionally he would pass whole days in Celia Thaxter's parlor, watching her at her painting in the window, and listening to the talk around him. He wished to hear and know what interested others. He liked nothing better, he once said, than going into the "store" in the old days at Amesbury, when it was a common centre, almost serving the purpose of what a club may be in these

later days, and sitting upon a barrel to hear "folks talk." The men there did not know much about his poetry, but they understood his politics, and he was able to put in many a word to turn the vote of the town. In Celia Thaxter's parlor he found a different company, but his relations to the people who frequented that delightful place were practically the same. He wished to understand their point of view, if possible, and then, if he could find opportunity, he would help them to a higher standpoint.

I remember one season in particular, when the idle talk of idle persons had been drifting in and out during the day, while he sat patiently on in the corner of the pretty room. Mrs. Thaxter was steadily at work at her table, yet always hospitable, losing sight of no cloud or shadow or sudden gleam of glory in the landscape, and pointing the talk often with keen wit. Nevertheless, the idleness of it all palled upon him. It was Sunday, too, and he longed for something which would move us to "higher levels." Suddenly, as if the idea struck him like an inspiration, he rose, and taking a volume of Emerson from the little library he opened to one of the discourses, and handing it to Celia Thaxter said: —

"Read that aloud, will thee? I think we should all like to hear it."

She read it through at his bidding; then he took up the thread of the discourse, and talked

long and earnestly upon the beauty and necessity of worship — a necessity consequent upon the nature of man, upon his own weakness, and his consciousness of the Divine Spirit within him. His whole heart was stirred, and he poured himself out towards us as if he longed, like the prophet of old, to breathe a new life into us. I could see that he reproached himself for not having spoken out in this way before, but his enfranchised spirit took only a stronger flight for the delay.

I have never heard of Whittier's speaking in the meeting-house, although he was doubtless often "moved" to do so; but to us who heard him on that day he became more than ever a light unto our feet. It was not an easy thing to do to stem the accustomed current of life in this way, and it is a deed only possible to those who, in the Bible phrase, "walk with God."

Such an unusual effort was not without its consequences. It was followed by a severe headache, and he was hardly seen abroad again during his stay.

We heard from him again, shortly after, under the shadow of the great hills where he always passed a part of every year. He loved them, and wrote eloquently of the loveliness of nature at Ossipee: "the Bearcamp winding down," the long green valley close by the door, the long Sandwich and Waterville ranges, and Chocorua filling up the horizon from west to northeast.

The frequent loneliness of his life often found expression. Once he says :—

"I wish I could feel that I deserved a tithe even of the kind things said of me by my personal friends. If one could but *be* as easily as preach ! The confession of poor Burns might, I fear, be made of the best of us :—

> "'God knows I 'm no the thing I would be,
> Nor am I even the thing I could be.'

And yet I am thankful every day of my life that God has put it into the hearts of so many whom I love and honor and reverence to send me so many messages of good will and kindness. It is an unspeakable comfort in the lonely and darkening afternoon of life. Indeed, I can never feel quite alone so long as I know that all about me are those who turn to me with friendly interest, and, strange to say, with gratitude. A sense of lack of desert on my part is a drawback, of course ; but then, I say to myself, if my friends judge me by my aim and desire, and not by my poor performance, it may be all right and just."

The painful solitude of his life after his dear niece's marriage was softened when he went to live with his cousins at Oak Knoll, in Danvers, a pleasant country seat, sheltered and suited to his needs.

Of this place Mrs. Spofford says, in a delightful biographical paper : "The estate of Oak

Knoll is one of some historical associations, as here once lived the Rev. George Burroughs, the only clergyman in the annals of Salem witchcraft who was hung for dark dealings, Danvers having originally been a part of the town of Salem, where witchcraft came to a blaze, and was stamped out of existence. . . . The only relic on the place of its tragedy is the well of the Burroughs' house, which is still in the hay-field, and over which is the resting-place of the sounding-board of the pulpit in the church where the witches were tried."

At Danvers he was able to enjoy the free open air. He loved to sit under the fine trees which distinguished the lawn, to play with the dogs, and wander about unmolested until he was tired. The ladies of the house exerted themselves to give him perfect freedom and the tenderest care. The daughter became his playmate, and she never quite grew up, in his estimation. She was his lively and loving companion. Writing from Danvers, one December, he says, "What with the child, and the dogs, and Rip Van Winkle the cat, and a tame gray squirrel who hunts our pockets for nuts, we contrive to get through the short dark days."

Again: "I am thankful that February has come, and that the sun is getting high on his northern journey. The past month has been trying to flesh and spirit. . . . I am afraid my letter has a complaining tone, and I am rather

ashamed of it, and shall be more so when my head is less out of order. . . . There are two gray squirrels playing in my room. Phœbe calls them Deacon Josiah and his wife Philury, after Rose Terry Cooke's story of the minister's 'week of works' in the place of a 'week of prayer.'"

He showed more physical vitality after he went to Danvers, and his notes evince a wide interest in matters private and public outside his own library life. He still went to Portland to see his niece and her husband whenever he was able, and now and then to Boston also. But Philadelphia at the time of the Centennial was not to be thought of. "I sent my hymn," he wrote from Amesbury in 1876, "with many misgivings, and am glad it was so well received. I think I should like to have heard the music, but probably I should not have understood. The gods have made me most unmusical.

"I have just got J. T. F.'s charming little book of 'Barry Cornwall and His Friends.' It is a most companionable volume, and will give rare pleasure to thousands. . . . I write in the midst of our Quaker quarterly meeting, and our house has been overrun for three days. We had twelve to dine to-day; they have now gone to meeting, but I am too tired for preaching.

"I don't expect to visit Philadelphia. The very thought of that Ezekiel's vision of machin-

ery and the nightmare confusion of the world's curiosity shop appalls me. I shall not venture."

He was full of excellent resolutions about going often to Boston, but he never could make a home there. "I see a great many more things in the city than thee does," he would say, "because I go to town so seldom. The shop windows are a delight to me, and everything and everybody is novel and interesting. I don't need to go to the theatre. I have more theatre than I can take in every time I walk out."

No sketch of Whittier, however slight, should omit to mention his friendship for Bayard Taylor. Their Quaker parentage helped to bring the two poets into communion; and although Taylor was so much the younger and more vigorous man, Whittier was also to see him pass, and to mourn his loss. He took a deep interest in his literary advancement, and considered "Lars" his finest poem. Certainly no one knew Taylor's work better, or brought a deeper sympathy into his reading of it. "I love him too well to be a critic of his verse," he says in one of his letters. "But what a brave worker he was!"

The reading of good books was, very late in life, as it had been very early, his chief pleasure. His travels, his romance, his friendships, were indulged in chiefly by proxy of the printed page. "I felt very near Dr. Mulford through

his writings," he said. "He was the strongest thinker of our time, and he thought in the right direction. 'The Republic of God' is intellectually greater than St. Augustine's 'City of God,' and infinitely nearer the Christian ideal."

"That must be a shrewd zephyr," Charles Lamb used to say, speaking of his Gentle Giantess, "that can escape her." And so we may say of Whittier and a book. "Has thee seen the new book by the author of 'Mr. Isaacs'?" he asked (having sent me "Mr. Isaacs" as soon as it appeared, lest I should miss reading so novel and good a story). In the same breath he adds: "I have been reading 'The Freedom of Faith,' by the author of 'On the Threshold,' just published by Houghton & Co. It is refreshing and tonic as the northwest wind. The writer is one of the leaders of the new departure from the ultra-Calvinism. Thank thee just here for the pleasure of reading Annie Keary's biography. What a white, beautiful soul! Her views of the mission of spiritualism seem very much like ——'s. I do not know when I have read a more restful, helpful book.

"How good Longfellow's poem is! A little sad, but full of 'sweetness and light.' Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, and myself are all getting to be old fellows, and that swan-song might serve for us all. 'We who are about to

die.' God help us all! I don't care for fame, and have no solicitude about the verdicts of posterity.

"'When the grass is green above us
And they who know us and who love us
Are sleeping by our side,
Will it avail us aught that men
Tell the world with lip and pen
That we have lived and died?'

"What we *are* will then be more important than what we have done or said in prose or rhyme, or what folks that we never saw or heard of think of us."

The following hitherto unpublished poem was written about this period upon the marriage of the daughter of his friend Mrs. Leonowens: —

TO A. L.

WITH THE CONGRATULATIONS OF HER MOTHER'S FRIEND

The years are many, the years are old,
My dreams are over, my songs are sung,
But, out of a heart that has not grown cold,
I bid God-speed to the fair and young.
Would that my prayer were even such
As the righteous pray availing much.
But nothing save good can Love befall,
And naught is lacking since Love is all,
Thy one great blessing of life the best,
Like the rod of Moses swallows the rest!

(Signed) JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Oak Knoll, 6th mo. 7, 1878.

Later he describes himself as listening to the "Life of Mrs. Stowe." "It is a satisfying book, a model biography, or, rather, autobiogra-

phy, for dear Mrs. Stowe speaks all through it. Dr. Holmes's letters reveal him as he is — wise, generous, chivalrous. Witness the kindliness and delicate sympathy of his letters during the Lord Byron trouble. . . . Miss W. has read us some of Howells's 'Hazard of New Fortunes.' It strikes me that it is a strong book. That indomitable old German, Linden — that saint of the rather godless sect of dynamiters and anarchists — is a grand figure; one can't help loving him."

The poet's notes and letters are full of passages showing how closely he followed public affairs. "If I were not sick, and to-morrow were not election day," he says, "I should go to Boston. I hope to be there in a few days, at any rate. You must 'vote early and often,' and elect Hooper. Here we are having Marryat's triangular duel acted over by our three candidates. I wish they were all carpet-bagging among the Kukluxes. It would n't hurt us to go without a representative until we can raise one of our own." . . .

And again: "I am somewhat disappointed by the vote on the suffrage question. It should be a lesson to us not to trust to political platforms. A great many Republicans declined to vote for it or against it. They thought the leaders of the suffrage movement had thrown themselves into the hands of Butler and the Democrats. However, it is only one of those

set-backs which all reforms must have — temporary, but rather discouraging.

"I worked hard in our town, and we made a gain of nearly one hundred votes over last year."

"I am happy," he says later, "in the result of the election — thankful that the State has sat down heavily on ——. I never thought of taking an active interest in politics this year, but I could not help it when the fight began."

And still later in life: "I am glad of the grand overturn in Boston, and the courage of the women voters. How did it seem to elbow thy way to the polls through throngs of men folk?"

Whittier never relinquished his house at Amesbury, where his kind friends, Judge Cate and his wife, always made him feel at home. As the end of his life drew near, it was easy to see that the village home where his mother and his sister lived and died was the place he chiefly loved; but he was more inaccessible to his friends in Amesbury, and the interruptions of a fast-growing factory town were sometimes less agreeable to him than the country life at Oak Knoll. He was a great disbeliever in too much solitude, however, and used to say, "The necessary solitude of the human soul is enough; it is surprising how great that is."

Once only he expresses this preference for

the dear old village home in his letters. "I have been at Amesbury for a fortnight. Somehow I seem nearer to my mother and sister; the very walls of the rooms seem to have become sensitive to the photographs of unseen presences."

As the end drew near, he passed more and more time with his beloved cousins Gertrude and Joseph Cartland in Newburyport, whose interests and aims in life were so close to his own.

The habit of going to the White Mountains in their company for a few weeks during the heat of summer was a fixed one. He grew to love Asquam, with its hills and lakes, almost better than any other place for this sojourn. It was there he loved to beckon his friends to join him. "Do come, if possible," he would write. "The years speed on; it will soon be too late. I long to look on your dear faces once more."

His deafness began to preclude general conversation; but he delighted in getting off under the pine-trees in the warm afternoons, or into a quiet room upstairs at twilight, and talking until bedtime. He described to us, during one visit, his first stay among the hills. His parents took him where he could see the great wooded slope of Agamenticus. As he looked up and gazed with awe at the solemn sight, a cloud drooped, and hung suspended as it were from

one point, and filled his soul with astonishment. He had never forgotten it. He said nothing at the time, but this cloud hanging from the breast of the hill filled his boyish mind with a mighty wonder, which had never faded away.

Notwithstanding his strong feeling for Amesbury, and his presence there always at "quarterly meeting," he found himself increasingly comfortable in the companionship of his devoted relatives. Something nearer "picturesqueness" and "the beautiful" came to please the sense and to soothe the spirit at Oak Knoll. He did not often make record in his letters of these things; but once he speaks charmingly of the young girl in a red cloak, on horseback, with the dog at her side, scampering over the lawn and brushing under the sloping branches of the trees. The sunset of his life burned slowly down; and in spite of illness and loss of power, he possessed his soul in patience. After a period when he usually felt unable to write, he revived and wrote a letter, in which he spoke as follows of a poem which had been sent for his revision: "The poem is solemn and tender; it is as if a wind from the Unseen World blew over it, in which the voice of sorrow is sweeter than that of gladness — a holy fear mingled with holier hope. For myself, my hope is always associated with dread, like the shining of a star through mist. I feel, indeed, that Love is victorious, that there is no

dark it cannot light, no depth it cannot reach; but I imagine that between the Seen and the Unseen there is a sort of neutral ground, a land of shadow and mystery, of strange voices and undistinguished forms. There are some, as Charles Lamb says, 'who stalk into futurity on stilts,' without awe or self-distrust. But I can only repeat the words of the poem before me." . . .

One of the last, perhaps the very last visit he made to his friends in Boston was in the beautiful autumn weather. The familiar faces he hoped to find were absent. He arrived without warning, and the very loveliness of the atmosphere which made it possible for him to travel had tempted younger people out among the falling leaves. He was disappointed, and soon after sent these verses to rehearse his experience: —

"I stood within the vestibule
Whose granite steps I knew so well,
While through the empty rooms the bell
Responded to my eager pull.

"I listened while the bell once more
Rang through the void, deserted hall;
I heard no voice, nor light foot-fall,
And turned me sadly from the door.

"Though fair was Autumn's dreamy day,
And fair the wood-paths carpeted
With fallen leaves of gold and red,
I missed a dearer sight than they.

"I missed the love-transfigured face,
The glad, sweet smile so dear to me,

The clasp of greeting warm and free:
What had the round world in their place?

"O friend, whose generous love has made
My last days best, my good intent
Accept, and let the call I meant
Be with your coming doubly paid."

But even this journey was beyond his strength. He wrote: "Coming back from Boston in a crowded car, a window was opened just behind me and another directly opposite, and in consequence I took a bad cold, and am losing much of this goodly autumnal spectacle. But Oak Knoll woods were never, I think, so beautiful before."

In future his friends were to seek him; he could go no more to them: the autumn had indeed set in.

Now began a series of birthday celebrations, which were blessings not unmixed in his cup of life. He was in the habit of writing a brief note of remembrance on these anniversaries; in one of which, after confessing to "a feeling of sadness and loneliness," he turns to the Emerson Calendar, and says, "I found for the day some lines from his 'World Soul:' —

"'Love wakes anew this throbbing heart,
And we are never old;
Over the winter glaciers
I see the summer glow,
And through the wild piled snow-drift
The warm rose-buds blow.'

Reading them, I took heart."

On another occasion he says: "In the intervals of visitation on that day my thoughts were with dear friends who have passed from us; among whom, I need not say, was thy dearest friend. How vividly the beautiful mornings with you were recalled! Then I wondered at my age, and if it was possible that I was the little boy on the old Haverhill farm, unknown, and knowing nobody beyond my home horizon. I could not quite make the connection of the white-haired man with the black-locked boy. I could not help a feeling of loneliness, thinking of having outlived many of my life-companions; but I was still grateful to God that I had not outlived my love for them and for those still living. Among the many tokens of good will from all parts of the country and beyond the sea, there were some curious and amazing missives. One Southern woman took the occasion to include me in her curse of the 'mean, hateful Yankees.' To offset this, I had a telegram from the Southern Forestry Congress assembled in Florida, signed by president and secretary, informing me that 'In remembrance of your birthday, we have planted a live-oak tree to your memory, which, like the leaves of the tree, will be forever green.'"

Birthdays, on the whole, in the face of much sadness, brought him also much that was agreeable and delightful in remembrance. One old friend always gave him great pleas-

ure by sending a huge basket of gilded wicker, in which were placed fruits of every variety from all quarters of the globe, and covered with rare flowers and ferns. In this way he visited the gardens of the Orient, and could see in his imagination the valleys of Napa and of Shiraz. On the occasion of a dinner given him at the Brunswick Hotel, on his seventieth birthday, he wrote: "I missed my friend. In the midst of so much congratulation, I do not forget his earlier appreciation and encouragement, and every kind word which assured and cheered me when the great public failed to recognize me. I dare not tell thee, for fear of seeming to exaggerate, how much his words have been to me."

Thus the long years and the long days passed on with scarcely perceptible diminution of interest in the affairs of this world. "I am sorry to find that the hard winter has destroyed some handsome spruces I planted eight years ago," he wrote one May day; "they had grown to be fine trees. Though rather late for me, I shall plant others in their places; for I remember the advice of the old Laird of Dumbiedikes to his son Jock: 'When ye hae naething better to do, ye can be aye sticking in a tree; it 'll aye be growin' when ye are sleeping.' There is an ash-tree growing here that my mother planted with her own hands at threescore and ten. What agnostic folly to think that tree has outlived her who planted it!"

The lines of Whittier's life stretched "between heaven and home" during the long period of eighty-four years. A host of friends, friends of the spirit, were, as we have seen, forever clustering around him; and what a glorious company it was! Follen, Shipley, Chalkley, Lucy Hooper, Joseph Sturge, Channing, Lydia Maria Child, his sister Elizabeth — a shining cloud too numerous to mention; the inciters of his poems and the companions of his fireside. In the silence of his country home their memories clustered about him and filled his heart with joy.

> "He loved the good and wise, but found
> His human heart to all akin
> Who met him on the common ground
> Of suffering and of sin."

His "Home Ballads" grew out of this very power of clinging to the same places and the old loves, and what an incomparable group they make! "Telling the Bees," "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "My Playmate," "In School Days," are sufficient in themselves to set the seal to his great fame.

As a traveler, too, he is unrivaled, giving us, without leaving his own garden, the fine fruit of foreign lands. In reading his poems of the East, it is difficult to believe that he never saw Palestine, nor Ceylon, nor India; and the wonder is no less when he writes of our own wide country. Indeed, the vividness of his poems about the slaves at St. Helena's Island and elsewhere

make them among the finest of all his local poems. One called "The Pass of the Sierra" may easily bear the palm among much descriptive writing.

He watched over his last remaining brother during a long illness and death, during the autumn and winter of 1882 and 1883 in Boston. The family all left Oak Knoll and came to be with him at a hotel, whence he could make frequent visits to his brother's bedside; but the unwonted experience of passing several months in town, and the wearing mission which brought him there, told seriously upon his health, and caused well-grounded anxiety as to the result. The day after the last services had been performed he wrote to a friend: "Indeed, it was a great comfort to sit beside you and to feel that if another beloved one had passed into the new life beyond sight and hearing, the warm hearts of loved friends were beating close to my own. You do not know how grateful it was to me. Dr. Clarke's presence and words were full of comfort. My brother did not approve of a display of flowers, but he loved violets, and your simple flowers were laid in his hand. . . . Give my love to S., and kiss the dear child for me."

It was not, however, until 1890 that we could really feel he had left the years of active service and of intellectual achievement as things of the past. He was shut out from much that

gave him pleasure, but the spirit which animated the still breathing frame, though waiting and at times longing for larger opportunity, seemed to us like a loving sentinel, covering his dear ones as with a shield, and watching over the needs of humanity. The advance of the colored people, the claims of the Indians and their wrongs, opportunities for women, statesmen, and politicians, the private joys and sorrows of those dear to him, were all present and kept alive, though in the silence of his breast.

The end came, the door opened, while he was staying with the daughter of an old friend at Hampton Falls, in New Hampshire — that saintly woman whom we associate with one of the most spiritual and beautiful of his poems, "A Friend's Burial." After a serious illness in the winter of 1892 he was almost too frail for any summer journeying; but with his usual wisdom and instinctive turning of the heart towards old familiar places, he thought of this hospitable house where he seemed to gain strength, and where he found much happiness and the quietness that he loved. His last illness was brief; he was ministered to by those who stood nearest him. And thus the waves of time passed over him and swept him from our sight.

It is a pleasure now to recall many a beautiful scene in summer afternoons, under the

trees at Danvers, when his spirit animated the air and made the landscape shine with a radiance not its own. Such memories serve to keep the whole world beautiful wherein he moved, and add to his poetry a sense of presence and a living light.

Old age appears in comparison to every other stage of human existence as a most undesirable state. We look upon its approaches and its ravages with alarm. Death itself is far less dreadful, and "the low door," if it will only open quickly, brings little fear to the thoughtful mind. But the mystery of decadence, the long sunsetting, the loss of power — what do they mean? The Latin word *saga*, from which the French get *la sagesse*, and we "the sage," gives us a hint of what we do not always understand — the spiritual beauty and the significance even of loss in age.

Whittier, wearing his silver crown, brought the antique word into use again, and filled it with fresh meaning for modern men.

TENNYSON

TENNYSON

It is difficult at the present time, when Tennyson's poetry has become a part of the air we breathe, to look back into the world of literature as it existed before he came.

There is a keen remembrance, lingering ineradicably with the writer, of a little girl coming to school once upon recitation day, with a "piece" of her own selection safely stored away in her childish memory. It was a new poem to the school, and when her turn came to recite her soul was full of the gleam and glory of Camelot. She felt as if she were unlocking a treasure-house, and it was with unspeakable pleasure to herself that she gave, verse after verse, the entire poem of "The Lady of Shalott." Doubtless the child's voice drifted away into sing-song, as her whole little self seemed to drift away into the land of faery, and doubtless also the busy teacher, who was more familiar with Jane Taylor and Cowper, was sadly puzzled. When the child at length sat down, scarcely knowing where she was in her sudden descent from the land of marvel, she heard the teacher say, to her amazement

and discouragement, after an ominous pause, "I wonder if any young lady can tell me what this poem means?" There was no reply.

"Can *you* tell us?" was the next question, pointed at the poor little girl who had just dropped out of cloudland. "I thought it explained itself," was the plaintive reply. With a slight air of depreciation, in another moment the next recitation was called for, and the dull clouds of routine shut down over the sudden glory. "Shades of the prison-house" then and there began to close over the growing child. One joy had for the present faded from her life, that of a sure sympathy and understanding. Not even her teacher could see what she saw, nor could feel what lay deep down in her own glowing heart. Nevertheless Tennyson was henceforth a seer and a prophet to this child and to the growing world; but for some, who could never learn his language, he was born too late.

The picturesqueness of Scott and Byron, the simple piety of Cowper, had satisfied the poetic and religious nature of the world up to that time. Shelley and Keats had indeed lived, but men had scarcely then learned generally to read them. Tennyson may be looked upon as their interpreter, in a measure, to the common world. Even Wordsworth, the mountain-top of poetry, the leader, whom Tennyson called his master — even he failed to give the common mind, which

looks for drama, any long poem which he who runs may read. This humanity in poetry is distinctly, first of all, Shakespearian; but if this quality should seem to any reader not also Tennysonian, let him re-read "Guinevere," in the "Idylls of the King," and reverse his decision.

The hearts of men were largely attuned by Tennyson, and taught to understand the affinities and symbolisms of nature. This new era in literature opened about the year 1830, when Tennyson gave a few poems to the world, which were chiefly canceled by his later judgment. A small book in green paper covers lies before me as I write, "privately printed" in 1862, containing his poems printed between 1830 and 1833, and giving the first readings of some which have been sanctioned in his later editions. The volume "privately printed" has been most privately treasured lest anything should appear from it to "vex the poet's mind." For thirty years it has lain in a secret drawer, with these words inscribed upon the cover: "Not to be lent; not to be stolen; not to be given away."

Some of these poems have been wrought over until we are reminded of his own line,

> "Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere;"

others seem to have been gathered up and published without permission by an American publisher, who in some way gained possession of

the book. The present perfected edition, however, published by Macmillan, evidently contains all the poems Tennyson wished to have remembered. The chief interest in the small green book is in the early readings, which are a good study for those who pursue the art of poetry. We see in them the sure integrity of the master-hand.

"Isabel" was not, perhaps, one of the very earliest poems, although it stands among the early poems of character in the perfected edition. It does not appear in the green book, yet the title already stands in the table of contents. In his own revised editions it has always appeared unchanged from the first. There is a flawless loveliness in this poem which makes it especially worthy of admiration. "Isabel" possesses a peculiar interest, because it is understood to be the poet's tribute to his wife, and indeed even his imaginative eye could hardly elsewhere have found another to whom this description would so properly fit: —

"The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness

Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance and of sway,—
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife."

The relation of Tennyson's life to that of other men has been but imperfectly understood. There was indeed a natural sublimity in his character which gave him, as he has himself said of the poet's mind, a power for scorn of things fit to be scorned; but his capacity for friendship has been proved again and again. The tree, as of old, is known by its fruits, and we need only recall the poems to James Spedding, to F. D. Maurice, to Mary Boyle, to Lord Dufferin, his correspondence with Edward Fitzgerald, and the great note of grief and consolation in "In Memoriam," to know a man capable of friendship, and one who has drawn to himself the noble lovers of his time.

There was an unconsciousness of outward things, of the furniture of life, which left him freer than most men to face the individual soul that approached him. There was also a fine consistency in his personality, — no tampering with the world; no trying to serve two masters. The greatness of his presence was felt, we believe, by all who approached him; he seemed to be invested by a strange remoteness from the affairs of the world. Yet it was easy for the spirits to draw near to him who really wanted what he could give. His hospitality was large

and sincere. In his own words of the "Great Duke" we read his perfect likeness: —

> "As the greatest only are,
> In his simplicity sublime."

A friend who knew him wrote once: "Tennyson found out in the golden season of his life, his youth, just what kind of work he was fitted to do, and he never squandered an hour in search of his primary bearings. . . . There is always a gravity about him, a becoming nobleness, which reminds one of what St. Simon said of Fénélon, 'When he is present it requires an effort to cease looking at him.'"

When this friend returned after his first interview with Tennyson, many years ago, we can well recall the eagerness with which we listened. His excitement as he described the hours they had passed together was hardly less than that of his hearer. Every minute detail of the interview was impatiently demanded. "How did he look?" was asked immediately in the first pause, and "What did he say?" followed before there was quite time to speak. In reply came a full description of the tall figure, clad in a long gray dressing-gown, presenting itself in the half-opened doorway of his chambers in the Temple, and looking cautiously out at the new comer.

"'Oh! it is you,' he said, drawing his visitor in through the narrow space with a most cordial welcome. He was sitting before the fire,

with his books about him, which he put aside, and while he talked he began to toast sundry slices of bread for our repast. As for his looks, his head is a very grand one, and his voice has a deep swelling richness in it. He had just received from the printers some proof sheets of the 'Idylls of the King,' and then and there he chanted the story of Enid and Elaine: chanted is the true word to apply to his recitations. He had a theory that poetry should always be given out with the rhythm accentuated, and the music of the verse strongly emphasized, and he did it with a power that was marvelous."

The next recollection, and one that sweeps vividly across my memory, is that of going to Farringford for the first time, and seeing Tennyson among the surroundings so admirably suited to his tastes and necessities. The place was much more retired than at present; indeed, there was neither sight nor sound of any intrusion during those summer days. The island might have been Prospero's own, it seemed so still and far away.

Beyond the gardens and the lawn the great downs sloped to the sea, and in the distance on either hand could be seen the cliffs and shores as they wound away and were lost in the dim haze that lay between us and the horizon. We found ourselves suddenly walking as in a dream, surrounded with the scenery of his poems.

It is still easy to distinguish with perfect

clearness to the "inward eye" two figures rambling along the downs that lovely day, and pausing at a rude summer-house, a kind of forgotten shelter, a relic of some other life. The great world was still as only the noon of summer knows how to be; the air blew freshly up from the sea, and the figures stopped a moment to look and rest. The door of the shelter hung idly on rusted hinges, and the two entered to enjoy the shade. Turning, they saw the whole delicious scene framed in the rude doorway. "Ah," the lady said, "I have found one of your haunts. I think you must sometimes write here." Tennyson looked at her with a smile which said, "I can trust my friends;" and putting his hand up high over the door, he took from the tiny ledge a bit of pencil and paper secreted there, held them out to her for one moment, and then carefully put them back again. There was not much said, but it was an immediate revelation, and a cherished bit of confidence. Perhaps on that sheet was already inscribed,

> "Ask me no more; the moon may draw the sea,
> The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
> With fold on fold, of mountain or of cape;"

or perhaps the page was waiting for "The Sailor-Boy," or glimpses of the great "Tyntagel," or "Lyonesse."

I could not know, nor did he, what he was yet to do. I only felt — all who knew him felt

— that he knew his work demanded from him the sacrifice of what the world calls pleasure. He endeavored to hold his spirit ready, and his mind trained and responsive.

His constant preoccupation with the business of his life rendered him often impatient of wasting hours in mere "personal talk." He was always eager and ready to hear of large matters of church or state from those who were competent to inform him; but it was his chief joy, when his friends were gathered about him, to read from other poets or from his own books.

In this same visit there was much talk of Milton, of whom he spoke as "the great organist of verse, who always married sound to sense when he wrote." Surely no one ever gave the lines of that great poet as he did. It was wonderful to hear. It would be impossible to forget that grand voice as he repeated: —

> "The imperial ensign which full high advanced
> Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
> With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
> Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
> Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds."

Tennyson's chanting of his own "Boädicea" was very remarkable.

> "Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,
> Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable."

But nothing could excel the effect of his rendering of "Guinevere," his voice at times trem-

ulous with emotion, and his face turned from the light as he read,

"Let no man dream but that I love thee still,"

and all the noble context glowing with a white heat. It was easy then to find that his own ideal,

"Flos regum Arthurus,"

was not a legend to him alone, but a vision of the Holy Grail toward which he aspired.

It were easy, indeed it is a temptation, to record every detail, stamped as they all are on the memory after several visits at Farringford and at Aldworth; but the beautiful paper printed only a few years ago by Mrs. Anne Thackeray Ritchie, now given to the world in a volume, where Tennyson stands as one of "The Light-Bearers," would make any repetition of the history of his family life worse than unnecessary. Mrs. Ritchie's friendship with the members of that household, and her familiarity with the houses and scenery which surrounded them, have given her the opportunity to do what her genius has executed.

Summer was again here, with a touch of autumn in the air — this autumn in which we write — when we last saw Lord Tennyson at Aldworth. He was already unwell and suffering from a cold. He sat, however, on his couch, which was drawn across the great window, where he could look off, when he turned his

head, and see the broad green valley and the hills beyond, or, near at hand, could watch the terrace and his own trees, and catch a glimpse of the garden.

The great frame had lost its look of giant strength; the hands were thinner; but the habit of his mind and spirit was the same. Again we heard the voice; again we felt the uplift of his presence. He was aware that he was not to stay here much longer, and when we bent over him to say good-by, we knew and he knew it was indeed "farewell." He was surrounded with deep love and tenderness and the delightful presence of his little grandchildren, and when, shortly after, his weakness increased, he doubtless heard the words sounding in his mind: —

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages,
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages."

He asked for "Cymbeline" that he might carry the noble lines clearly in remembrance. Later the moon shone full into the room, and in that dim splendor, and to the music of the autumn wind, his spirit passed.

EMILY
LADY TENNYSON

EMILY, LADY TENNYSON

When I first saw Lady Tennyson she was in the prime of life. Her two sons, boys of eight and ten years of age perhaps, were by her side. Farringford was at that time almost the same beautiful solitude the lovers had found it years before, when it was first their home. Occasionally a curious sight-seer, or a poet-worshiper, had been known to stray across the grounds or to climb a tree in order to view the green retired spot ; but as a rule Tennyson could still wander unwatched and unseen through the garden, over the downs, and stand alone on the shore of the great sea.

It was already afternoon when we arrived dusty and travel-stained at the hospitable door, which was wide open, shaded by vines, showing the interior dark and cool. Mrs. Tennyson, in her habitual and simple costume of a long gray dress and lace kerchief over her head, met us with her true and customary cordiality, leading us to the low drawing-room, where a large oriel window opening on the lawn and the half-life-size statue of Wordsworth were the two points which caught my attention as we entered. Her

step as she preceded us was long and free. Something in her bearing and trailing dress, perhaps, gave her a mediæval aspect which suited with the house. The latter, I have been told, was formerly a baronial holding, and the fair Enid and the young Elaine appeared to be at one with her own childhood. They were no longer centuries apart from the slender fair-haired lady who now lay on a couch by our side, — they were a portion of her own existence, of a nature obedient to tradition, obedient to home, obedient to love. The world has made large advance, and the sound of the wheels of progress were not unheard in the lady's room at Farringford. She was ready to sympathize with every form of emancipation; but for herself, her poet's life was her life, and his necessity was her great opportunity.

I recall Mrs. Browning once saying to me, "Ah, Tennyson is too much indulged. His wife is too much his second self; she does not criticise enough." But Tennyson was not a second Browning. The delicate framework of his imagination, filled in by elemental harmonies, was not to be carelessly touched. She understood his work and his nature, and he stood firm where he had early planted himself by her side in worshiping affection and devotion. "Alfred carried the sheets of his new poem up to London," she said one day, "and showed them to Mr. Monckton Milnes, who

persuaded him to leave out one of the best lines; but I persuaded him to replace it when he came home. It is a mistake in general for him to listen to the suggestions of others about his poems."

All this was long ago, and the finger of memory has left faint tracings for me to follow; but I recall her figure at dinner as she sat in her soft white muslin dress, tied with blue, at that time hardly whiter than her face or bluer than her eyes, and how the boys stood sometimes one on either side of her in their black velvet dresses, like Millais' picture of the princes in the tower, and sometimes helped to serve the guests. By and by we adjourned to another room, where there was a fire and a shining dark table with fruit and wine after her own picturesque fashion, and where later the poet read to us, while she, being always delicate in health, took her accustomed couch. I remember the quaint apartment for the night, on different levels, and the faded tapestry, recalling "the faded mantle and the faded veil," her tender personal care, and her friendly good-night, the silence, the sweetness, and the calm.

She sometimes joined our out-door expeditions, but could not walk with us. For years she used a wheeled chair, as Mrs. Ritchie has charmingly described in her truthful and sympathetic sketch of the life at Aldworth. I only associated her with the interior, where her influence was perfect.

The social atmosphere of Farringford, which depended upon its mistress, was warm and simple. A pleasant company of neighbors and friends was gathered when "Maud" was read aloud to us, a wide group, grateful and appreciative, and one to which he liked to read.

After this the mists of time close over! I can recall her again in the gray dress and kerchief following our footsteps to the door. I can see her graceful movement of the hand as she waved her adieux; I can see the poet's dusky figure standing by her side, and that is all.

Sometimes she lives dreamily to the world of imagination as the Abbess at Almesbury; and sometimes, as one who knew her has said, she was like the first of the three queens, "the tallest of them all, and fairest," who bore away the body of Arthur. She was no less than these, being a living inspiration at the heart of the poet's every-day life.

It would seem to be upon another visit that we were talking in the drawing-room about Browning. "We should like to see him oftener," she said, "he is delightful company, but we cannot get him to come here; we are too quiet for him!"

I found food for thought in this little speech when I remembered the fatuous talk at dinner-tables where I had sometimes met Browning, and thought of Tennyson's great talk and the lofty serenity of his lady's presence.

My last interview with Lady Tennyson was scarcely two months before Tennyson's death. The great grief of their life in the loss of their son Lionel had fallen upon them meanwhile. They were then at Aldworth, which, although a house of their own building, was far more mediæval in appearance than Farringford. She was alone, and still on the couch in the large drawing-room, and there she spoke with the same youth of heart, the same deep tenderness, the same simple affection which had never failed through years of intercourse. When she rose to say farewell and to follow me as far as possible, she stepped with the same spirited sweep I had first seen.

The happiness of welcoming her lovely face, which wore to those who knew her an indescribable heavenliness, is mine no more; but the memory cannot be effaced of one lady who held the traditions of high womanhood safe above the possible deteriorations of human existence.

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